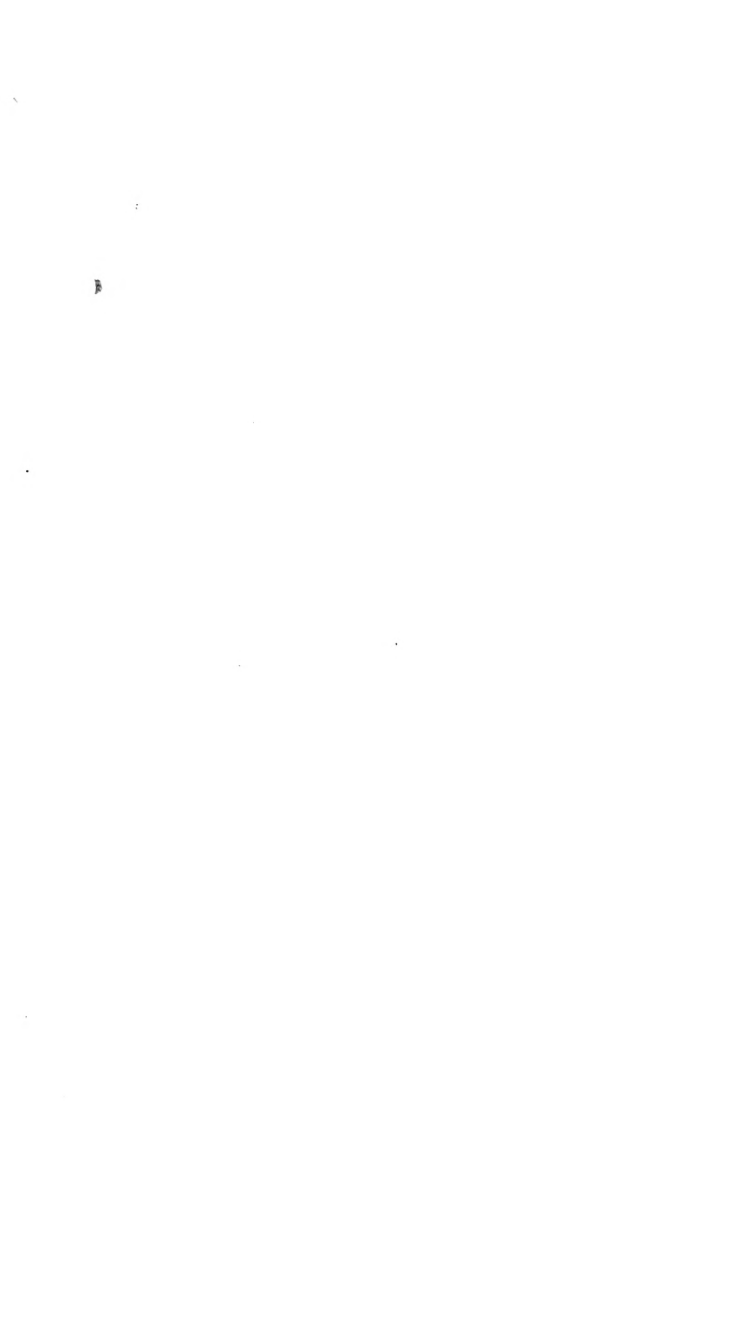




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INDIAN SKETCHES,

TAKEN

DURING AN EXPEDITION

TO THE

PAWNEE TRIBES.

BY

JOHN T. IRVING, JR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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ERRATA.

- Page 74, line 1, for *Tappaye* read *Tappage*.
“ 108, “ 3, for *chief* read *chief's*.
“ 124, “ 20, for *Loovah* read *Looah*.
“ 136, “ 10, for *their surfaces* read *the surface*.
“ 185, “ 15, for *they* read *we*.
“ 196, “ 7, for *charnel* read *charnel house*.

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INDIAN SKETCHES.



CHAPTER I.

Preparations for Reception.—Reception by Grand Pawnees.

DURING the evening previous to our arrival, several half-breeds, who had been sent out by the Commissioner to gain information of the probable reception which awaited us, came dropping in, all bearing promises of a friendly welcome, from the Pawnee chiefs. At sunrise the next morning, the tents were struck, and placed in the heavy baggage wagons; and a more than usual bustle and note of preparation was heard in the camp. The

the heavy baggage wagons, and the party commenced slowly moving towards the village.

It was a fine sunny morning ; the clumps of trees which clustered on the low banks of the river, and the numberless islands which dotted its broad, shallow waters, were alive with woodpeckers of every size and hue. In every direction, they darted among the tall dead trees which overhung the muddy stream, making the trunks resound with the incessant hammering of their small but powerful beaks. Large flocks of gaily plumed parroquets, whirled screaming past us, with a surprising velocity.

At ten o'clock the party had travelled several miles across the prairie, and our vicinity to the village was becoming more perceptible. Mounted Indians, sent out to watch for our approach, were seen here and there flying across the

hills in the direction of the village, to give notice of the arrival to their chiefs. At a distance we could perceive several bands of Indians in pursuit of large droves of their wild and fiery horses, which they were urging at a headlong speed in the direction of the town. In another quarter, on the top of a ridge of small hills, groups of five or six were standing, intently watching the motions of the party, which, from the jaded state of the oxen, were necessarily slow. The soldiers who had been lazily lounging across the prairie, were now called in, and formed in a compact body round the baggage wagons. An hour more brought us in sight of the village.

Upon our near approach, we could perceive that the hills surrounding it were black with masses of mounted warriors. Though they swarmed upon their tops, to the number of several thousands, yet

they stood motionless and in silence, watching the approach of the mission. At length a single horseman detached himself from the mass, and came galloping down the hill and over the prairie to meet us. As he approached there was a wild, free air about him, and he governed his gigantic black horse with the greatest ease. I could not but think that if the rest of these warriors were of the same mould, any resistance of our band, however desperate, would avail but little against an attack of these proud rulers of the prairie.

Upon reaching the party, he sprang from his horse, and shook hands with Mr. E——. He then gave directions through the interpreter, that the band should be drawn up in as small a compass as possible, to avoid all contact with his warriors. After spending some time in completing his arrangements, he galloped back, and gave the signal to the rest.

In an instant the hills were deserted, and the whole mass of warriors were rushing towards us, across the broad bosom of the prairie. It was a moment of intense and fearful expectation. On they came; each mad horse, with erect mane and blazing eye, urged forward by the bloody spur of an Indian master. They had reached within two hundred yards of the party, but still the speed of their horses was unchecked, and the powerful tramp of their hoofs rang like thunder upon the sod of the prairie. At a signal, however, from the chief, the band separated to the right and left, and commenced circling round us, in one dark, dense flood. Their whoops and yells, and the furious and menacing manner in which they brandished their bows and tomahawks, would have led a person unacquainted with their habits, to have looked upon this reception as any thing but friendly. There is

something in the fierce, shrill scream of a band of Indian warriors, which rings through the brain, and sends the blood curdling back to the heart. Their ornaments, though wild, were many of them beautiful. The closely shaved heads of some were adorned with the plumage of different birds. Others wore an ornament of deer's hair, bound up in a form resembling the crest of an ancient helmet, and a plume of the bald eagle floated from the long scalp-locks of the principal warriors.

Some few wore necklaces of the claws of the grisly bear, hanging down upon their breasts. The bodies of some were wrapped in buffalo robes, or the skin of the white wolf; but the most of them wore no covering, save a thick coat of paint. This they had profusely smeared over their bodies and arms, and many had even bestowed it upon the heads and limbs of their horses. After dashing round

us for some time, the chief waved his hand, and the turmoil ceased. The warriors sprang from their horses, and seating themselves round in a large circle, waited for the arrival of the chief of the Grand Pawnees. In a few moments he advanced to meet Mr. E——, accompanied by the different chiefs of Tappaye Pawnee, Pawnee Republican, and Pawnee Loup villages. He was a tall, powerful Indian. A fillet of the skin of the grisly bear, ornamented with feathers, was bound round his head. Over his shoulder was thrown a large mantle of white wolf-skin, also adorned with feathers. His legs were cased in black leggings of dressed buffalo hide, worked with beads, and fringed with long locks of human hair. These were taken from scalps won in his various war expeditions, and hung down over his knees, trailing upon the ground as he walked. He first advanced and wel-

comed Mr. E——, and afterwards the rest. The chiefs of the three different villages were then introduced, and repeated the words of welcome uttered by the first.

This ceremony was scarcely finished, when a movement was observed among the crowd, and a powerful roan horse, mounted by an armed Indian, bounded forward to the middle of the circle, where the rider sprang from his back. He was a stranger among the tribe, and spoke not their language—a Kioway* Indian, from the borders of Mexico—a member of those wild tribes, who like the Arabs rove the immense plains of the west, and carry destruc-

* We afterwards learned that this Indian had become enamoured of a young girl of his own tribe, the wife of another; but her husband having gone upon some expedition, she had taken advantage of his absence to leave her nation with her lover; and together they had fled to the Pawnee village, which they reached a week previous to our arrival.

tion to all who are not strong enough to resist them. After pausing and looking around him for a moment, with a glance that seemed to challenge opposition from the assembled warriors, he walked up to Mr. E——. He was slight and beautifully formed; but there was a fire in his eye; a swell of the nostril; and a proud curve of the lip, which showed a spirit that brooked no opposition; shunned no danger; and could only be quenched by the chill of the grave. His long black hair, which trailed behind him on the ground, was plaited together, and ornamented with about twenty plates of massive silver. A band of silver was fastened round his throat, and several large medals of the same metal hung upon his breast. Upon his arms were several bands of silver, and rings of the same upon his fingers. His leggings, though more finely wrought, like those of the chiefs,

were fringed with scalps. A scalp consisting of the entire upper part of a human head, hung from the bit of his fiery horse. Upon coming up he offered his hand to Mr. E——, and in succession to the rest; and after pausing and gazing upon us for a short time, with some curiosity, he sprang upon his horse, and riding through the circle, was lost behind the more distant crowd of warriors.

For a short time after the introduction of the various chiefs, the mass of grim beings hemmed us in, sitting upon the ground like so many dark forms of statuary, without voice or motion. Several at length arose, and coming towards Mr. E——, and Major D——, (the United States agent for the Pawnee Indians,) extended the stem of their pipes to the lips of each, then, instantly retiring, resumed their station in the crowd. By this action, we afterwards learned, that

each pledged himself to present a horse to the person to whom he extended his pipe. In the meanwhile, two old men, who had no horses to lose by the free indulgence of liberal feelings, rose up, and by loud and vehement harangues, endeavoured to pique the liberality of the rest. They boasted of the number they would bestow, *if they but had them*, and recounted as examples the acts of generosity which they had performed in their youth. As that youth ran far back, beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant, there was little probability of their being contradicted.

After they had finished, the Wild Horse, (I do not recollect his Indian name) the principal warrior of the nation, stood up and harangued the assembled multitude. He launched out in a long panegyric upon the whites, which was delivered with a warmth of expression no

doubt greatly increased by the sight of the wagons laden with presents. This warrior was one of the most singular as well as ferocious of the tribe; and many were the tales of his war expeditions, afterwards related to us by the trappers, as we lay stretched around our night-fires. His height could have been but little short of seven feet, and every limb was in proportion. Unlike the rest of his tribe, his hair remained unshaven, and hung in long tangled locks, which reached nearly to his waist, and were profusely smeared with red ochre. His low, retreating forehead was almost buried in wrinkles; and his eyes, deep set in his head, glowed like living coals. His nose was large and prominent; and the size of an enormous mouth was not at all diminished by two streaks of vermilion, which he had drawn from each corner, to his ears. He wore neither covering nor ornament, unless the profusion

of black clay and red ochre which covered his body, deserved that name. He stood out in his naked proportions a giant among those who surrounded him; and the wild energy of his gesticulation as he delivered his harangue, showed the prodigious strength hidden in his form, and which only required an occasion to bring it into action. From his youth upward he had been the leading warrior in the nation, and his deeds had spread a terror of his name through all the hostile tribes. Though no chief, his influence in the village was equal to theirs, rendering him as much an object of jealousy to them as of dread to their enemies.

When he had finished his address, the chief rose and spoke to his men. After this the circle opened, and forming into two lines, one on each side, the warriors prepared to escort us into their village.

CHAPTER II.

Journey to the Grand Pawnee Village.—Old Indian Female.—Chief's Lodge.—Indian Feasts.—Kioway Female.

As soon as we emerged from the crowd that had surrounded us, we perceived the plain between us and the village swarming with the rest of its inhabitants. It appeared as if every man, woman, and child had looked upon the day of our arrival, as one of jubilee. The boys had thrown aside their bows and arrows, the females had abandoned their drudgery, and the old men had ceased their songs of former victories, to paint themselves up for the festival. The reception was over, and all the requisite awe of their nation had been impressed upon us. They now threw aside

the stern, unbending character of the Indian warrior, and pressed round us with all the kind hospitality of hosts, in receiving their most welcome guests.

Small bands of young men amused themselves by dashing around the party, at the full speed of their horses, and attempting to oust each other from their saddles by the violent collision of their animals. Occasionally a few would start off in a race across the plain, whooping and screaming, and clattering their arms in the ears of their steeds, to excite them even beyond the mad rate at which they were careering.

Others of the young men hung round the party, making their remarks on its different members, and occasionally exciting loud peals of laughter from their comrades. These however were frequently cut short by a stern word from one of the chiefs.

The whole road from the plain to the village, was lined with women and children. They had not dared to approach during the formalities of our reception, but now eagerly pressed forward to gaze upon so unwonted a sight as that of a white stranger entering freely into their village. Besides this they were all anxious to gratify that curiosity which is peculiarly strong in the bosom of an Indian—especially a female.

They were nearly all mounted upon little stiff-maned drudge horses of the village, sometimes singly, but generally in clusters of two or three.

In particular, one withered, gray-headed old squaw, with a family of four children under her charge, attracted our attention. She was mounted upon a little wall-eyed, cream-coloured pony, with a roach mane and a bob-tail. There was a lurking devil looking out of his half-closed

eye, the very antipodes of his rider, who sat upon his back like the picture of Patience. Her charge she had arranged, as well as could be expected from a person in her situation. One little fellow, whose eyes gleamed like sparks of fire, from beneath the long tangled hair, which nearly covered his face, was striding almost upon the neck of the horse, armed with a heavy Indian whip. One little one was dozing in her arms, another was clinging tightly to her back. The face of a fourth, like the head of a caterpillar, just ready to emerge from a cocoon, was peering from the mouth of a leather bag, fastened between her shoulders.

But though the woman thus scrupulously divided the burden with her steed, he seemed far from satisfied with his situation, and at last determined to rid himself of his encumbrance.

Tossing his head in the air, he com-

menced waltzing, and capering round upon his hind feet, to the great discomfiture of the squaw. In great tribulation she reached out both hands, and clung with might and main to the high pommel of the Indian pack-saddle, while two of the children, left to their own guidance, clung like monkeys round her body.

The horse, finding that the first experiment had not succeeded to his satisfaction, altered his plan of action. He planted his fore feet firmly upon the sod, and flourished his heels as high in the air as his head was the moment before. Still his rider continued to cling to the saddle, making use of every expression of Indian adjuration and soothing, in a vain appeal to the sensibilities of the restive animal. There was one, however, evidently delighted with his capers; this was the naked little elf perched upon his neck, who evidently aided and abetted the mutiny by

a sudden switch of his whip—occasionally casting back his sly, laughing black eye upon the chattering old lady and her screaming brood.

At last the animal finding that no physical force of his could free his back from the burden, came to the conclusion that the less time he spent in accomplishing his journey the shorter would be his ordeal. So he started off at a full gallop for the village, and we caught our last glimpse of him as he dashed between the lodges, urged on by the lash of his imp-like little rider.

When the party had once commenced its march, it was not long before they reached the point of destination; for though the Indians crowded forward to satisfy their curiosity, they remained at such a distance as to offer no obstacle to our progress. This rule of etiquette was, however, occasionally transgressed by troops

of untrimmed, goblin-looking little urchins who hung upon the heels of the party. They crowded around the baggage wagons, and gazed with a mixture of terror and wild delight upon the oxen, who, with lolling tongues and reeling steps, were, almost inch by inch, winning their way to the village.

Several times when a circle of little curious faces, anxious to see, but ready to run, had formed around the team, a sharp, shrill scream from some more mischievous of the gang, would in an instant disperse all their rallied courage, and send them scampering at full speed over the prairie.

Another grand object of attraction was *the Black Bear*, who trudged in front, surrounded by a rabble crowd of women and children. From the first moment of our arrival he had been an object of intense curiosity, and had been gazed at with a mixture of fear and astonishment

by the whole nation. But there is an old saying that "too much familiarity breeds contempt;" and in this case it was verified. By degrees, the circle which formed around him at a respectful distance, became more and more compressed. It was in vain that he attempted to rid himself of their company; they swarmed around him like ants. If he quickened his pace, they did the same; if he lingered, they were equally slow; and if he turned upon them, they scattered in every direction. But after a while, even this wore off, and they finally hemmed him in, so that it was almost impossible to move for the crowd. When they had thus closed upon him, the lurking spirit of mischief began to show itself. They tugged at his coat tail, they pulled his pantaloons, and they jostled him until the perspiration, the effect of fear and exertion, poured in streams down his face. At length one

toothless, gray-headed old crone, attracted by the glistening appearance of his black leather cap, made a violent snatch, and seized hold of it. A hot scramble ensued for the prize, which, after much derangement to the wardrobe of the negro, was obtained by the rightful owner. He had no sooner regained his property, than he opened his shirt, and placed it next his bosom. He then buttoned his coat over it up to the chin, evincing his respect to the nation by performing the rest of his journey *uncovered*.

We found that the Pawnee village had been rebuilt since it was burnt by the Delawares. It is situate in the open prairie, at the foot of a long range of hills, and within about fifty yards of the Platte. The river at this place is about two miles broad, and very shallow, being constantly forded by the squaws, who visit the different islands, and obtain from them

the only fuel and building materials, to be found in this part of the country.

The lodges are numerous, and stand close together, without the least regard to regularity. They are built in the same way as those in the Otoe village.

On account of the scarcity of wood, several families congregate together in the same lodge. The male portion pass the whole day, lounging and sleeping around, or gorging themselves from the large kettle filled with buffalo flesh, which is perpetually over the fire.

As we entered the village, the tops of the lodges were completely covered with women and children, and the area in front of the chief's dwelling was equally crowded. When we reached the front, the chief, who had ridden in advance of the party, stepped from the dark passage which formed the entrance to his abode, to meet us. He was completely enveloped

in a robe of white wolf skin, upon which was painted a hieroglyphic account of his warlike achievements. Upon the approach of Mr. E——, he advanced towards him, and taking the robe from his shoulders, presented it to him, requesting him (through the interpreter) to keep it for his sake. He then ushered the party into his dwelling, and pointed out the place allotted for the reception of the contents of the wagons. After this he called together a number of Indians, and gave them directions to assist in unloading. He stood at the door, watching their movements, to prevent any attempt at purloining—a crime too common among the lower classes of an Indian village.

Nearly half an hour elapsed in this way, during which time the lodge was becoming more and more crowded. One dusky form after another glided with a noiseless step over the threshold, moving

across to the darkest corners of the lodge. Here they seated themselves upon the ground, and shrouded their shaggy robes around them, so as completely to screen the lower part of their faces. As they fixed their unwavering gaze upon us from the dark parts of the building their eyes seemed to shine out like glowing balls of phosphorus.

Not a word was spoken—no undertoned conversation was carried on—all was silence, save the hurried footsteps of those who were busied according to the directions of the chief. No jests were uttered, for we were now under the roof of their leader, and any word spoken in derogation of his guests would have called down instant punishment.

Upon our entrance into the lodge, a large kettle had been filled with buffalo flesh and hard corn, and placed over the fire. When we were fairly settled in

our abode, and the bustle of unloading had in a measure passed away, the wife of the chief (by-the-by he had five of them) poured the whole of its contents into a large wooden bowl. She then armed each of us with a black dipper made of buffalo horn, and made signs for us to commence.

We did not wait for a second invitation, but immediately, with both fingers and dippers, attacked the mountain of food before us. We had not eaten since daylight; it was now late in the day; and the appetites of the party, never particularly delicate, having increased in proportion to the length of their fast, the devastation was enormous. But every excess brings with it its own punishment; and our case was not an exception to the general rule. Scarce had we finished, when a little Indian boy, half covered with a tattered buffalo skin, forced

his way into the lodge, elbowing in among the warriors with all that transient air of consequence worn by *little* characters when charged with some mission of importance. He came to the side of the chief, who was sitting near us, with his legs doubled under him, after the Turkish fashion, and whispered in his ear. The chief rose, and announced that the Long Hair, the second warrior of the village, had prepared a feast in honour of our arrival, and was waiting for us to come and partake. There was some demurring as to the acceptance of this invitation. The Interpreter, however, informed us that there was no resource, as eating your way into the good will of the savages, is necessary to the success of an Indian treaty. It was useless to plead that we had already eaten sufficient, for that is a thing incredible to an Indian, who always carries with him an appetite proportioned to the quantity

to be eaten, and the opportunity of doing so. Let the latter come as often as it may, it invariably finds him prepared.

After some consultation, seeing no remedy, we left the lodge, and followed our little guide through the intricacies of the village, to the dwelling of the Long Hair. When we entered he was sitting upon the ground, and motioned us to a seat upon some dirty cushions of undressed hides. He was a stern, gloomy looking man, with an anxious, wrinkled brow, a mouth like iron, and an eye like fire. He evidently made efforts to be sociable; but it was not in his nature; and during the whole feast, the stern, unbending character of the Indian warrior, was continually peering out from beneath the show of hospitality. He urged us to eat, and he even attempted to smile; but it more resembled the angry snarl of a wild-

cat, than the evidence of any pleasurable emotion. In short, we liked him not, and hurried through our feast as soon as possible. When we had finished, and while a number of the party were smoking, in turn, from a large red stone pipe, which he passed round, the Doctor rose and slowly sauntered round the lodge. He at length observed a small bundle of bones, and skin, which hung from a pole crossing the centre of the lodge. Curious to know what it might contain, he reached out his hand to take hold of it. From the moment that he had left his seat, the brow of the chief had darkened, but he said nothing; contenting himself by narrowly watching the motions of his guest;—but no sooner had he touched the bundle, than the effect upon the frame of the Indian was like an electric shock. He half started from his seat; the veins on his forehead swelled like whipcord; and his eyes shot fire.—

With clenched fists and extended arms, he shrieked out something between a yell and an imprecation. The secret was soon explained by the frightened Interpreter. The bundle that had attracted the curiosity of the Doctor, was the medicine bag* of the lodge. To disturb this is one of the greatest outrages that can be inflicted upon the superstitious feelings of an Indian. At another time, the Doctor might have paid dearly for his rashness. As it was, at the earnest solicitations of the Interpreter, he resumed his seat, and

* Every lodge in an Indian village contains what is called its Medicine Bag, which is hung up in the most conspicuous place, and regarded with the greatest veneration, not only by the inhabitants of that individual lodge, but by the whole tribe. Little is known of their contents, as they are seldom opened, and always with the greatest formalities. On these occasions, all possible care is taken to exclude strangers, whose presence or interference is regarded as a certain source of future misfortune.

the anger of the chief passed away. Shortly after this, another courier arrived to invite us to a third feast; and taking our leave, we followed him. This feast was exactly the same as the former. Before we had finished, invitation after invitation came pouring in upon us, until we had visited about ten or fifteen lodges. One after another, the different members of the party then gave out, and returned to the abode of the chief.

Upon our return, Mr. E—— assembled the different warriors, and after some consultation, the following day was appointed for holding a council, to agree upon the terms of the treaty.

When this was settled, the chief turned and spoke a few words to the heralds.*

* These heralds are self-elected, and are composed of the oldest men in the village, who run through the town to spread the orders of the chief. When no such service is required, they amuse them-

They immediately started through the village, proclaiming the time appointed for the council.

While Mr. E—— was thus engaged, the rest of the party drew round the fire, to discuss the different events of the day. The bearskin, forming the inner door of the lodge, was slowly raised, and a female stepped timidly in, and moved rapidly, and evidently with a desire to escape observation, into the darkest part of the lodge. Her whole appearance bespoke her a stranger. She was beautiful; and though a timid being, moved with the step of a queen. She was the wife of the Kioway Indian, and her dress was of a richness corresponding with his. A bright band of silver was fastened round her neck; a small jacket

selves by stalking round the village, yelling out advice to the young men, with voices which may be heard at the distance of a mile, but which, as far as I was able to judge, was but little attended to.

of scarlet cloth, the spoil of some pillaged caravan, edged with silver lace and beads, was secured round her waist and breast, with scarlet ribands, and a long garment of blue cloth enveloped the rest of her form. Like her husband, she wore medals of silver upon her breast, and bracelets of the same upon her wrists. Her mocassins, also, were more finely ornamented than those of the Pawnee women, who were seated around.

From the moment of her entrance, she became the object of attraction to all eyes. Observing this, she withdrew into one of the berths, and dropping in front of her a screen of grass matting, remained there for the rest of the day.

CHAPTER III.

Grand Pawnee Village.—The Council.

THE second day after our arrival was appointed for holding the council. It was a fine frosty morning. The sun rose like a huge ball of crimson over the low hills ; pouring a flood of lurid light upon the dancing waters of the Platte, and gemming with a thousand tints, the frost beads that glittered upon the tall withering grass of the prairie.

A number of us left the lodge early in the morning, and strolled towards the banks of the Platte. A few gaunt, sinewy wolf-dogs were prowling about the silent village, in search of food. The savages had not yet left their lairs, except one or

two solitary individuals, muffled in their robes, who at sight of us, hurried to their abodes to give information that the strangers were stirring. Occasionally, as we passed the dark funnel-like mouth of the dwellings, the half of a face would be seen, cautiously looking out, and after staring at us for an instant, would vanish into the interior to call out the rest of the inhabitants.

We had not proceeded far, before about a dozen half-starved Indian wolf-dogs collected at our heels. Here they followed, raising their nostrils, baring their long white fangs, and uttering deep growls. Their green flashing eyes; their long bristling hair; and their tails stiffly extended as they slowly stalked after us, convinced us that they waited only for the slightest appearance of fear on our part, to commence an attack. It also plainly showed that however welcome our appear-

ance might be to the Indians, there were some members of the village who did not participate in the general feeling of joy.

In spite, however, of this show of ill will, we continued our walk until we reached the Platte. Here we seated ourselves upon the trunk of a tree lying prostrate on the bank of the river.

In the meantime, the Indians had received intelligence of our movements, and began to edge towards the stream. The children came running openly and in droves. The old men and warriors carelessly sauntered along towards the water, and came down upon us as if by accident. Others more modest, crouched down in the long grass, creeping stealthily forward, until every stump concealed a painted form, and every bush was alive with curious faces.

Nearest to us was a tall, thin Indian, clad in an old, worn-out buffalo-robe.

There was a “gallows-bird” look about him,—no doubt some prodigal son, disinherited by a crusty old curmudgeon father. He was standing with his back half towards us, and his face turned away, apparently gazing up the river ; the very attitude to “give the lie” to his eyes, which were convulsively straining towards us, from the corner of their sockets, and scanning our every movement with an intense and eager curiosity.

At length one of the party wishing to inquire about our horses, beckoned him forward. This was a signal for all the rest. They came trooping up from every quarter, under the pretence of giving information ; and upon every sign made by us, about twenty tongues gabbled unintelligible answers. After spending about half an hour upon the banks, and finding that nothing was to be gained in the way of

information, we turned off in the direction of the village.

It was now humming with life. The warriors were collected in small knots of five or six, and, by their vehement gestures, were apparently engaged in earnest conversation. The children were rolling and tumbling in the dirt; the squaws were busily engaged. Some were bringing from their lodges large leather sacks of shelled corn; others were spreading it out to dry, upon the leather of their buffalo-skin tents, which had been stretched out upon the ground. Others were cleansing from it the decayed kernels and packing it up in small sacks of a whitish undressed leather, resembling parchment. These were then deposited in cache-holes* for a winter's store.

* The *Cache*, is a large hole dug in the ground like a cistern. It is narrow at the top (about four

At a distance from the village, a band of females were slowly wending along the top of one of the low prairie ridges, to their daily labour in the small plantations of corn. These are scattered in every direction round the village, wherever a spot of rich, black soil, gives promise of a bountiful harvest. Some of them are as much as eight miles distant from the town.

There is a fearful uncertainty hanging round the lives of these females. At the

feet in diameter) but wider as it descends, until its form somewhat resembles that of a jug. It will contain about an hundred bushels of corn.

Upon leaving their villages, the Indians deposit the corn which is to serve for their winter's store in granaries of this description, and cover the apertures with earth, so that it is impossible, for a person unacquainted with their exact position, to discover the entrance. The name *Cache* is given by the French traders who derive it from the word *cacher* (to conceal.)

rising of the sun they depart to their toil, often never to return. They are constantly exposed to the attacks of lurking foes, who steal down upon their villages, to cut off stragglers. They come and disappear with equal silence and celerity. Their presence is unknown, until the long absence of a friend, or a mutilated body, found sometimes after the lapse of several days, conveys to their friends a thrilling token, that the hand of the destroyer has been busied among them, and the hour of vengeance has passed.

As we proceeded, we were again waited upon by a committee of the dogs of the town. They formed in a train behind us, with the same expression of ill feeling that had been manifested by their predecessors. But this last display of rancour was of short duration ; for a stout, tattered Indian, who looked as if his last ablution had been performed during his infancy, rush-

ed out from one of the lodges, and with a few vigorous applications of his foot changed the aspect of affairs. In an instant the glistening eyes of the curs sunk from fury to meekness; the hair which bristled boldly up was sleeked quietly down to their backs; the tails which had stood out as erect as bars of iron, were tucked snugly away between their legs, and the snarls were converted into yells. In short, the canine committee were unmercifully beaten, and fled yelping and howling in every direction.

Our attention was now called to the long, lean, wiery old heralds, who were stalking through the town, calling forth the warriors, and exhorting them to prepare for the council. Occasionally they stopped to gossip with some gray-headed crony, who stood blinking like an owl at the entrance of his dwelling. At other times they paused to bestow a little wholesome

advice upon some wild urchin, guilty of some breach of decorum towards their guests.

Upon reaching the lodge of the chief, we found that active preparations had been made for holding the council. The goods and presents which had been received hastily into the building, were now piled up carefully. The lodge had been swept clean; a large cheery fire was crackling in the centre. The rabble crowd of loungers and hangers-on had been routed; and besides the family of the chief, we were the only occupants of the spacious building.

At mid-day the chiefs and braves began to assemble. They were full dressed; many of the young warriors had spent the whole morning in preparation, and now presented themselves, fully ornamented for the meeting.

As the hour for the opening of the coun-

cil grew nearer, the tall, muffled warriors poured in, in one continuous stream. They moved quietly to the places allotted them, and seating themselves in silence round the chief, according to their rank. There was no wrangling, or bustle for precedence ; each knew his station, and if perchance one of them occupied the place of some more distinguished warrior, upon his appearance he immediately rose and resigned them his seat.

The crowd continued flowing in until the lodge was filled almost to suffocation. As they came in, they seated themselves, until five or six circles were formed, one beyond the other, the last ranging against the wall of the building. In the ring nearest the chiefs, sat the principal braves, or those warriors whose deeds of blood entitled them to a high rank in the councils of the nation. The more distant circles were filled by such young men of the

village as were admitted to its councils. The passage leading to the open air, was completely blocked up with a tight wedged mass of women and children, who dared venture no nearer to the deliberations of the tribe.

In the course of half an hour, nearly all the principal warriors had assembled. The chief then filled a large stone pipe and lighting it, drew a few puffs, inhaling the smoke into his lungs, and blowing it out in long blasts through his nostrils. He then passed it to the whites, who, each having inhaled a few whiffs in their turn, handed it to their neighbours. These again passed it on, until it had made the circuit of the whole assembly. While this was going on our attention was attracted by a violent commotion in the passage. In a moment afterwards the naked head and shoulders of the Wild Horse towered above the crowd. He

forced his way through them, and burst naked into the building. Here he seated himself in the inner ring, leaning his back against one of the pillars which supported the roof. The chief scowled grimly at the disturbance caused by his entrance. The Wild Horse, however, was a giant, whose wrath was not to be courted, and the matter passed off in silence. After a short time Mr. E—— rose and addressed the council, stating the views of the United States, and at the same time, the conditions of the treaty.

During the whole of the address, every sound was hushed into a deep and thrilling silence. Not a form stirred ; but all sat with their eyes steadily fixed upon his countenance. There was not even a long-drawn breath to break in upon the voice of the speaker ; though now and then, some proposal, which met with peculiar approbation, would elicit a loud grunt of

approval, from the deep, sonorous chests of the whole assemblage.

When Mr. E—— had finished his address, the chief of the Grand Pawnees rose and folded his heavy buffalo-robe round his body. His right arm and breast were left bare. The other hand and lower part of his body, were completely hid by the dark folds of his shaggy mantle. For a few moments he stood facing Mr. E—— in silence ; then stepping forward, his chest seemed to swell out,—he threw back his head, and raised his arm, with one of the fingers slightly extended, as if to command attention. He then paused and gazed with a hawk eye upon the iron faces of his warriors. The pause and glance were momentary ; and without moving the position of his arm, he commenced his harangue. It was short, energetic, and abounding with all the high-wrought figures of Indian oratory. As he proceed-

ed he grew more and more animated ; his chest rose and fell ; his finely modulated voice, which at first had stolen like music over the stillness, grew louder and louder, until its deep, fierce tones rang like thunder through the building. He threw his robe from his shoulders, leaving bare his almost convulsed frame. He fixed his eagle eye upon us ; he extended his bare arms towards us, he waved them over our heads, with a wild fury of gesticulation. Had it not been for his words of friendship, our fancies would have led us to imagine him some demon, pouring out the most fearful threats of vengeance. For about ten minutes his voice rolled through the lodge. Suddenly he fell from his loud, energetic language to the silvery, guttural tones natural to him, and in a short time finished his harangue.

After him, his son, the second chief of the tribe, rose and commenced an ad-

dress. While he was proceeding, a noise of voices arose at the extreme part of the lodge, near the passage. At first they were low and smothered; but at last they broke out into loud and angry altercation. The Wild Horse was crouching at the foot of one of the pillars, with his hands interlocked with each other, his arms encompassing his legs, and his body nearly hid by the long matted hair which hung over it. He was roused by the disturbance; but at first contented himself by an occasional sharp word addressed to the crowd. This silenced it for a few moments; but at last the brawling voices broke out into open clamour. The savage started to his feet, stalked among them, shook his brawny arms over their heads, and thundered a few stern words in their ears. This had the effect of magic in soothing the angry passions of the disputants. The voices sank into silence,

and the noise was hushed. For a few moments he maintained his menacing attitude over them; and then resuming his station at the foot of the pillar, the chief proceeded in his harangue.

When he concluded, several chiefs rose and addressed the party, welcoming them to their homes, with the kindest expressions of hospitality. At the same time they expressed their entire acquiescence in the terms of the treaty. After them several of the braves and warriors rose, and spoke to the same effect. When they had concluded, the following day was appointed for signing the treaty. The pipe was again passed round, and the council breaking up, the warriors left the lodge.

During the whole of the deliberation, which lasted about six hours, the interior of the building was excessively hot. The instant it was cleared, we strolled

out into the open prairie. A large crowd was gathered at a distance. We went towards it, and found it assembled to witness the slaughter of one of our oxen—the destined victim for the ratification of the treaty. The hunter who was to enact the part of butcher, had loaded his rifle, and now moved forward. The crowd spread off on each side, leaving the animal exposed to view. The beast, then for the first time seemed to have a suspicion of the fate that awaited him, raised his head, and gazed steadily at his butcher. The hunter took a few steps—the gun was to his cheek—the trigger clicked—we heard the bullet strike—the ox reared his heavy frame, and fell forward on the ground; but the ball had merely fractured the skull without being fatal. By degrees the animal raised himself from the ground upon his haunches. His head hung heavily forward, and a

thin streak of blood trickled down from the bullet hole in his forehead. Still he feebly supported his form upon his fore feet. His huge body rocked to and fro in the last extremity of anguish, and deep bellowings burst from his heaving lungs, resembling the tortured cries of a human sufferer. A second time the hunter advanced and fired; the ball was fatal; it crushed through the bone of the skull, and the beast fell forward with a deep groan. The crowd, raising a loud cry of exultation and delight, closed round him. The exhibition was sickening; we turned away and left the Indian butchers to their work.

CHAPTER IV.

Receiving Horses.—Departure from Grand Pawnees.—Crossing the Platte.—The Iotan's Wife.

THE morning at length arrived upon which we were to take our leave of the Grand Pawnees, and shape our course for the village of the Pawnee Republicans. It is situated upon the Loup fork of the Platte river, about twenty miles distant.

The couriers appointed to carry the tidings of our approach to the nation, had left the village the night before. We were now drawn out in the area in front of the lodge, awaiting the movements of the soldiers who were scattered around,

some driving in, and others searching for, the horses, on the small islands of the Platte.

The chief of the Pawnee Republican village, after lingering with us till the last moment, started forward across the river. In the dim distance we could perceive his flake-white horse skimming like a bird over the crests of the hills. Now he disappeared in their deep, undulating hollows, now he again flashed for an instant on the eye as he passed over the brow of some more distant ridge. He was pushing forward to reach his village, and marshal his warriors.

In about half an hour, the soldiers returned, driving in the horses, and commenced saddling them for the march.

In the meantime, those Indians who had promised horses on the first day of our meeting, brought them up. A young Indian first came forward, and led

up a bright, jet-black mare—after him followed another, holding in his hand a long buffalo tug, or halter, which restrained the wild motions of a two years' old colt. His colour was snowy white, here and there broken with spots of brown. He had been caught wild from the prairies but a few weeks before. He was a slave, but he had never been mounted—his back had never bent to a burden. They led him up in his own native wildness—his tail stood out—his ears were pricked up—his eyes starting—his nostrils expanded—and every hair of his long mane seemed almost erect with an undefinable feeling of terror. At one moment he dashed swiftly around at the full stretch of the long tug which secured him—then pausing, and shaking his long mane over his head, he fixed the gaze of his almost bursting eyes upon his captor. Then raising his head, and casting a long, lingering,

and almost despairing gaze upon the hills of the prairie, which till then had been his home, he made a desperate leap forward, dragging to the ground the Indian who held the end of his halter. Others, however, rushed to his assistance, and held him in. The crowd then attempted to close round him, but he reared upon his hind legs, and kept them at bay, with rapid and powerful blows of his fore feet. At length a young Indian who was standing near, threw off his robe and crept cautiously towards the animal from behind. With a sudden leap he bounded upon his back, and seized the tug, which was secured in his mouth. Before this, the efforts of the animal had been violent; but when he felt the burden upon his back—when he felt the curbing hand of his rider—he sent up a shrill and almost frantic scream—he bounded in the air like a wild cat—he reared, he plunged, but in vain; his rider

was a master hand, and retained his seat as unmoved as if he had constituted part of the animal itself. He curbed him in—he lashed him with his heavy whip, until he crouched like a dog upon the prairie. His spirit was crushed; and the last spark of freedom was extinguished. Shortly after, one of the hunters came up and tied a pack upon his back. He made no resistance, and they led him off with the rest, to finish his days in drudgery and toil.

In the meantime the other Indians led up their horses. It was evident that many of them had made their promises in the excitement of the moment. They were now fulfilling them as matters of conscience, not of inclination; and their horses were valuable in proportion. One was lame, another blind; one had large patches of skin galled upon his back, and the ears of another were cropped close to his head. In fine it was evident that they had select-

ed the very worst of their animals for the fulfilment of their promises. Our *stud* was a collection of the maimed, the halt, and the blind. One after another they came lingering up, until one Indian alone lagged behind. The chief inquired for him, and was told that he had gone out to search for his animal. Ten minutes elapsed. At last there was a movement in the crowd, and a sly-looking, old white-headed Indian made his way through it. In his hand he held the end of a long buffalo tug: the other was secured to his horse. Such a horse! he was blind of both eyes; his tail had been cut off short to his rump; his ribs stood out in bold relief; and his very joints creaked, as he walked stiffly after his leader. As for his age there was no mode of telling it, as his teeth had long since dropped out; but it must have been incalculable.

There was a smothered giggling among

the women, and a downright squall of laughter among the children, as the horse stalked forwards towards its future owner. The old Indian moved towards Mr. E——, and without raising his head placed the end of the halter in the hand of one of the soldiers. There was a deal of mischief in his look, and I could hear a smothered chuckle rattling beneath the folds of his robe, as he drew it up over his face, and disappeared among the crowd.

We now mounted and started at a rapid pace for the banks of the river. The heavy lumbering wagons followed more slowly, and a train of about half the village brought up the rear.

Upon reaching the banks we found that the Otoes were already on their way through the river. Some were wading up to their arm-pits; others, had missed the ford, and were swept down the stream, holding their blankets high over

their heads to keep them dry, as they struggled across the rushing current. Others, mounted on horses which they had trafficked for with the Pawnees, were dashing and spattering through the shallow parts of the river, or clinging to the manes of their steeds, as they ploughed their way through the deep current.

The river at this place was nearly two miles broad, here and there interspersed with small islands. The depth was ever varying; in some places it was but a few inches, in others it must have been from ten to twenty feet. At one moment, the water scarce reached the fetlocks of your horse—the next step sent him floundering up to the holsters.

After reaching the banks of the river, a short consultation was held. The heavy baggage wagons were then sent forward, with two Indians to guide them over the ford. After them followed the dearborn

wagons. One was driven by an old soldier, who kept steadily in the wake of the teams. Two mules drew the other. They were driven by our half-French, half-devil Joe, who was seated upon the dash-board of the wagon, swearing in broken English, sometimes at the animals, and at others, at the slow pace of the oxen which dragged the wagons in front. For some time, he followed steadily in their train; but at length his patience became exhausted, and he determined to drive forward at all hazards. He plied his whip upon the flanks of the mules. At the first application they stopped short—at the second they kicked up—but at the third they commenced moving forward—for they had learnt by long experience, that the patience and perseverance of their driver in the application of the lash, were sufficient to overcome even their own almost inexhaustible

fund of obstinacy, and ill nature. Half a dozen steps brought the water up to the bottom of the wagon. The mules doubted, but the driver whipped on. Another half a dozen steps, and the water gushed over the sides into the wagon—still the lash was busy. The next moment the beasts were swimming, with only the tips of their noses and ears, visible above the surface. The wagon had disappeared beneath the water, and the head of the driver, shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, went skimming along the surface, pouring out a steady stream of French and English oaths, jumbled into one common mass. Occasionally an arm was flourished above the water, inflicting a little chastisement upon the nose and ears of the animals, which caused them to dip under the water, with a prodigious increase of snorting, but not much acceleration of speed. At length, however, the deep water was passed, and

after drifting about a hundred yards down the river, the wagon gradually rose above the surface, and travelled slowly up the opposite bank.

The rest of the party then commenced their march in Indian file across the ford, keeping in a line with a tall Indian, who led the way. Most of the party followed the guide; but some of our horses were restive, and missing the ford, drifted us a short distance down the stream, where we reached a small island, and scrambling up its bank, galloped across to the opposite side.

Here we found a wife of the Iotan chief, standing on the edge of the water. She had accompanied him from his village. She was young, tall, and finely formed; her face, next to that of the wife of the Kioway Indian, was the most beautiful we had met with. Her hair was parted across her forehead,

and hung down upon her shoulders. A small jacket of blue cloth, was fastened round her shoulders and breast, and a mantle of the same, was wrapped around her body. They had been presented to her by the commissioner, but a few days before. She was standing upon a small sand-bar, and the water was gurgling around her feet; a short distance in front of her, a deep channel was rushing with a powerful current. She looked at the water, and then at her dress, with an expression of almost childish sorrow, for, to swim the river would ruin her finery. The Indians had all reached the opposite bank, and were waiting for the rest to come up, so that no assistance could be expected from them.

Just then the hunters dashed by her, into the deep channel, but did not even notice her. I was the last of the party, and she knew it; for though we could

not speak the same language, there was an imploring expression in her large dark eye as she fixed it upon me, that told every thing. Still I hesitated: I thought of pushing on; there was a powerful struggle between selfishness and a desire to assist her; she saw it, and speaking a few words in her own silvery tongue, she at the same time pointed to her new dress.

There was something so sorrowful in the tone and gesture, that I could not resist it. I took my rifle in my left hand, and reaching out my right, she seized it; she placed her foot on mine, and, with a sudden bound, was upon the back of my horse, stooping behind me, with her arms round my neck. The horse had so long been accustomed to have his own way in every thing, that he grew very indignant at this new imposition—but a lunge of the spurs subdued his wrath, and he bounded forward into the rushing river. He was a powerful

animal, and took to the water like a sea-fowl. The river rushed and roared around us, and we could feel the strong nervous quivering of his limbs, as he bore up against it. But occasionally as he went snorting along, he cast back spiteful glances at his riders. I expected mischief, and it came to pass. We felt his hoofs touch the bottom—three leaps—he was up the bank—his heels flew in the air—the arms of the squaw were jerked violently from my neck, and I saw her describing a somerset through the air; she landed upon her feet and received no injury. The Indians raised a shout of laughter, and the horse, satisfied with being relieved from his extra burden, jogged quietly on towards the Republican village.

CHAPTER V.

Journey to the Republican Village, and Reception.

IN about half an hour, our whole troop were safely landed on the bank of the Platte, opposite the town of the Grand Pawnees. In the faint distance we could perceive the inhabitants, still standing upon the tops of the lodges, and watching our movements. A few who had lingered in our train, and crossed the river with us, now prepared to return. After sunning themselves for a short time on the dry grass, to take off the chill they had received in swimming across the cold current, they again plunged into the river. Their dark heads and bodies, were

seen scattered over its whole breadth ; until shut out from our view by one of the hills of the prairie.

The distance between the Grand Pawnee, and the Pawnee Republican Village, is about twenty miles. The last is situated upon what is called the Loup Fork of the Platte river, and is about the same in size, as that of the Grand Pawnees. The different portions of the tribe who live upon this river, were formerly united. In the course of time, however, as their numbers increased, the difficulty of obtaining timber for fuel and building, also increased, until at last they divided into four distinct bands, each under a separate chief. The first seated itself upon the Republican Fork of the Platte, and is known by the name of the Grand Pawnee tribe. The other three located themselves upon the Loup Fork of the same river, and are distinguished by the names of the Republican Pawnees, the

Tappaye Pawnees, and the Pawnee Loups. They are altogether distinct from the Pawnee Picks, and speak not the same tongue. During our stay among the Grand Pawnees, we found a Pawnee Pick residing among them, but his language was unintelligible to the whole nation, with the exception of one Indian, who had resided among his people.

Our journey now lay across the prairie. An advance guard of about twenty Pawnees took the lead, conducting a number of loaded mules. Sometimes they were only ten or fifteen rods ahead, and then would push forward until we nearly lost sight of them. Behind us straggled our little band of Otoes; all on foot, except the wife of the Iotan chief. She had contrived by her winning arts, to soften the flinty nature of the old iron-sided soldier who drove one of the wagons, so as to get a seat upon a pile of bear-skins, composing our bedding.

Here she exerted herself, to maintain her hold in the good will of the veteran Jehu, by narrating to him by gestures, an account of her passage over the Platte.

The soldier listened to her patiently, and occasionally condescended to smile, when by her gesticulation, the story appeared to warrant it the most. At length one of his comrades rode up and asked :

“What are you and the wife of Iotan laughing at, Mack?”

“Curse me if I know,” retorted the other. “The squaw keeps up such a *bloody* cackling, I suppose there must be some joke, and so I laughed.”

After travelling a few hours over the prairie, we passed a single tree. It stood like a solitary sentinel, to guard the waters of a small spring, which gushed out at its foot ; the source of the only brook, which had crossed our path, during the whole route. The tree was an aged one ; short,

and sturdy. If aught might be judged from its gnarled and fantastically twisted limbs, it had maintained its station for centuries, contending against the fierce storms and tornados, which had swept the prairie. We felt a kind of companionship with this "veteran of the storms;" and as if by common consent, the party, both Indians and whites, came to a halt, to rest under its branches, and drink of the water which gurgled along at its roots.

In a quarter of an hour we again pushed forward. After an hour more of laborious travel, through long waving grass, we descried large droves of horses, with uplifted heads and erect manes, gazing at us from the different eminences. We perceived also the flying forms of mounted Indians, in the distance, and groups of others clad in flowing robes, and standing like statues upon the heights. This showed us that the town was not distant, and

that its warriors were on the watch for our coming. Intervening hills, however, still shut it out from our sight. As we proceeded, the groups disappeared one after another, and as we mounted the eminences where they had stood, we could perceive them, dashing forward, until they sank behind the brow of a high ridge, which still hid the town.

In half an hour, we ascended this ridge, and halted upon its top. A large plain, of about two miles in extent, lay at its foot, It was bounded by the waters of the Loup Fork, glittering through the verdant foliage which fringed its borders. On the opposite side of the river, was a high bluff, on which was situated the dingy lodges of the Republican village.

The plain in front of us, was alive with Indians. We had come upon them before they were prepared for our reception. Large troops were scouring the plain, apparently without an object. Single In-

dians were galloping in different directions ; some up the banks of the river, and others towards the village. The tall form of the chief, mounted on his white horse, was seen dashing to and fro among the bands, giving his orders, and assigning to all their several stations. In a few moments, a torrent of warriors poured down the steep bank, which led from the village. They plunged into the river, forced a foaming path through its water, broke their way through the thicket on its brink, and bounded over the plain, to the spot where the chief awaited their coming. A second confusion now seemed to take place, and all the different squads of horsemen congregated together, as if awaiting directions. This continued for a short time. The chief then detached himself from the crowd and galloped a few yards in front, and calling out a single warrior sent him towards us. The whole scene at our feet, was like the distant perspec-

tive of a panorama. The approaching warrior seemed at first to crawl along at a snail's pace. But when he drew nearer, we could hear the heavy tramp of his horse's hoofs, and see that his speed was furious.

He plied the lash, and kept at full stretch, until within a few paces of us. Then by a powerful effort, the horse was drawn almost erect in the air, and stopped in his mad career, as suddenly as if converted into stone. His rider sprang from him, and advanced to the Interpreter. He bore a request from the chief, that the party would descend into the plain, where his warriors could receive them in better style.

The request was obeyed, and in about twenty minutes, upon receiving a second message from the chief, we drew up to await the coming of his warriors.

The leader, who still maintained his stand in front of the mass, then waved his

arm. At this motion the band separated. A large body remained stationary, while an equal number galloped several hundred yards, to the right and left of the main division, and halted with their horses heading towards the party.

For a short time the chief stood watching the actions of both. It was not until he saw that every man was at his post, and every form as unmoved as stone, that he gave the signal. Then raising his arm, he wheeled his horse round, and sent up a long quavering whoop. Before it died away, a thousand throats had echoed back its ringing tones, and a thousand voices lent their aid in raising a cry, which almost shook the prairie. Although accustomed to its sound, and although we knew, that there was not a hand in that band, but would be extended towards us in friendship, yet its wild fierceness fairly caused us to shiver. At the same time the impulse was given to

the horses. At first their movements were regular, but before a hundred yards had been passed, each man sent up his shrillest cry, urged his steed forward to the utmost stretch of his speed, and the whole band came dashing forward in wild confusion. At the distance of about a hundred yards in front of us, the three divisions met, but for a moment; then separating, the torrent whirled in a circle round us at the same mad gait. Through the whole mass, we could perceive the powerful form of the chief. He was urging his steed round in the innermost circle; and above the loud din of whoops and yells, we could hear the tones of his trumpet voice, cheering his warriors onward in their wild course.

After this had continued for a short time, he made another signal, and one after another the whole band checked their horses, and became motionless. Then dismounting, a great number of them loosed

the tugs from their beasts, and cast them loose to career at will over the prairie. The chiefs, however, and the principal men of the nation, still remained on horseback to escort the party into the village.

When the band had seated themselves around, the same ceremony of presenting horses was repeated, which had taken place at the arrival of the party at the village of the Grand Pawnees.

About the same number were given as on the preceding occasion. As before, the old men who had nothing to offer, made up for it in speeches, exhorting others to munificence. They possessed in a high degree that generosity which is indulged at the expense of one's neighbours, and gains great applause from the world.

When this ceremony was finished, the circle opened, and our troop again mounting, prepared for their journey to the village.

CHAPTER VI.

Indian Mischief.—Crossing the Loup Fork of the Platte.—Entrance in the Republican Village.

No sooner had the chief signified by his movements his intention that the party should set out, than the dark ring round us was broken, and the whole mass of Indians flooded the prairie—pouring in the direction of their village. It was a scene of vast confusion. The horses which had been cast loose by their owners, careered wildly around the crowd. The mounted horsemen dashed about with a mad fury almost equal to that of the masterless beasts. If any thing could give to an inexperienced person an idea of a field of battle, where man and horse are

alike urged on by a reckless disregard of life, it is a scene like this.

There was a striking contrast between the conduct of the older and more influential chiefs, and that of the younger warriors. The first rode gravely by the side of the party. There was something stern, and even savage, in the fixed repose of their painted faces.

Every forehead was wrinkled with the thousand lines that seam an Indian brow; and, but for the tell-tale eyes which glittered in their deep-sunk sockets with a startling brilliancy, you would not have known that boiling blood, and hearts which could nourish passions like fire, were beating in the bosoms of those iron warriors.

These were the chiefs and older men of the tribe; the young men rode at a distance. There was nothing to restrain *them*; they took no part in the councils. Their chiefs had ordered them to receive

the party as friends, and they had obeyed their orders. They knew that a treaty of peace was to be made with the whites. They knew that in future the axe and scalping knife were to lie idle, and that war was to be at an end. But they did *not* know, that they were thus removing the only barrier which insured their own safety, and were forming the first link of the chain, which always has ended, and always will end in fetters to the free spirit of the Indian.

During the whole way from the plain to the bank of the river, the party kept compactly together. At length, however, one of the soldiers, mounted upon a powerful horse, gradually edged away, until he was about fifty yards distant from the main body. It was done without thought, and probably for the sake of gaining space that his horse might move more freely. He had reached some distance, and gained a point, beyond the observation of the

chief. Here the spirit of waggersy and mischief, which flourishes with rich growth in the bosom of a young Indian, began to display itself in the various pranks which they attempted to play upon him. Frequently they would flit their horses across his path, and in passing, dashed their heavy robes across the eyes of the animal causing him to rear, and plunge. This was a source of great annoyance to the rider, who was not the best horseman in the world, and had been mounted that day more for the sake of show, than for any desire which he had for the station. He did well enough as long as his steed travelled at a walk. He was most sorely puzzled when his speed was accelerated, and completely driven to his wit's end, when the horse grew restive under the annoyances of the Indians. *They*, however, always took especial care to be quick in their movements, and keep beyond the reach of his brawny arm ; for

there was something in the grave, worried features, and giant form of the veteran, which spoke a man not to be trifled with. For some time this continued, and he bore it with exemplary patience. At last a little, old wicry Indian, half covered with a buffalo robe, which from long use retained but little of its woolly covering, determined to come in for his share of the sport. He was mounted upon a little horse, of as lean and sinewy a make as himself, with an eye as fiery as a coal. He had no hair upon his tail, but at the successful accomplishment of any of his mischievous feats, he wagged the naked stump with an expression of keen satisfaction and relish.

At first the old fellow contented himself by whirling his beast round and round the powerful horse, which bore the veteran; and so near as almost to touch him at every circuit. The soldier did not appear to relish this, but still took no active measure

in the defensive. Finding that this was borne with patience, the old fellow grew bolder. In making one of his circuits, he ran his steed violently against the flank of the horse which bore the soldier, casting the rider from his precarious seat, almost on the neck of his beast, and causing a furious discharge of the heels of the aggrieved animal. At last the old Indian came to still closer quarters, and galloped full tilt against the horse, while a loud laugh was raised among the young Indians. The soldier recovered his seat, but began to lose his temper, and when the old man repeated his manœuvre he became downright angry. The most of the Indians saw that there was mischief in his eye, and drew off. The old man, however, was too much delighted with the success of his pranks to think of stopping. In the meantime the soldier made preparation to retaliate. The horse upon which he was mounted was of a very large size. He

had relished as little as his rider, the rigs that his tormentors had run upon him. The soldier knew this, and acted accordingly. As the Indian came again at full sweep, to run aboard of him, he suddenly drew in the powerful curb bridle, with a strong jerk, and at the same time buried his spurs in the flanks of his horse. The animal planted his fore feet into the sod, and his heels were discharged from behind as if thrown from a catapult. They came in contact with the ribs of his opponent's horse, at the moment that he was about to close with him. The nag was driven to the distance of several yards, and the rider hurled from his back, and sent rolling in the grass.

Though the Indians had relished the pranks played by their comrade, their enjoyment of the retaliation was greater; and they hooted, and jeered him, not so much for his breach of hospitality as for his want of success. To get rid of them,

he plied the lash upon his little steed, and together they went scampering to the village. The soldier in the meantime, taking advantage of the diversion in his favour, returned to the party.

A short time only elapsed, before we were at the brink of the river. Here the chief led the way across the shoalest fording place. The rest of the Indians, however, regardless of the depth, plunged in, and in a few moments, its whole surface was black with them.

It was a scene of great hubbub and confusion. Some were mounted upon powerful, and sinewy horses, which sped through the water like sea-birds. Others floundered, half drowning through the deep channel, frightening the more timid by their snorting and splashing. Some of the Indians threw themselves from their steeds, and boldly stemmed the current, half swimming, and half wading; while the relieved horses, scattering in every direction,

ploughed their way through the bubbling stream, and made for the nearest land. The baggage wagons toiled slowly along in the rear, keeping closely upon the trail of the chief.

After some time the whole party reached the opposite shore, at the foot of the high bluff, upon which stood the Republican village. The bank was steep, and almost precipitous. There was a pause of some length, before the arduous task of dragging the heavy vehicles up the hill, was imposed upon the jaded oxen. At length, however, a string of twelve were fastened before a single wagon, and united their strength to draw it up. The Indians stood by, with looks of wondering curiosity; but when they saw the lash inflicted, and the nervous efforts of the beasts, they shrank back with a feeling of fear, lest they should turn upon their persecutors. Even the older warriors showed signs of dread, and the children scampered in un-

disguised terror up the steep pathway. They paused, however, upon the top of the bluff, where they deemed that they might gaze in safety, upon the movements of their guests. After a sound drubbing, and much swearing on the part of the drivers, the jaded animals forced the wagons up the hill, and slowly proceeded through the village.

CHAPTER VII.

Indian Females and Feasts.

MANY of the inhabitants of this town had been present at our arrival at the Grand Pawnee village, and to them the novelty of our appearance was over. To the rest, however, more particularly the women and children, all was new, and our day of entering into the town, was one of jubilee. We found the pathway lined with women and children, and the spaces between the lodges, crowded with them. Here and there were knots of wild-looking boys, with their bows and arrows tucked under their arms, staring with open mouths, upon the travelling lodges as they termed our heavy wagons. Groups too of females—the married women with troops of

children—some on their backs and others at their heels, crowded round. Young and beautiful girls, also, wild as deer, were gazing at us with deep curiosity, but maintained a timid distance.

The most dauntless of the crowd, were two or three old crones, squalid and dirty in the extreme, and who, if aught might be judged from their looks, were the oldest women that ever lived. Every thing was withered about them, but their tongues, which still flourished with the vigour of former years. They were like racers; they had run against time, and gained the heat. Each of these beldames singled out her victim, from among the members of our party, and exerted herself to the utmost to render his situation agreeable, by dining his ears with her garrulity.

Another worthy of this class, had been entrusted with the care of about a dozen children of all ages and sexes. These she had ranged upon the dome-like top of one

of the lodges to see the spectacle, as we passed by. She stood in front of her elfish brood, keeping at bay by the violent exertions of both tongue and talons, the crowd, who, in their anxiety to obtain a view, were attempting to invade her sanctuary.

The persons who had placed their little goblin young ones in her charge, understood well her nature. Her tongue knew no rest. At one moment it was busy in bestowing a shower of wholesome advice, upon some refractory little urchin, whose curiosity would not permit him to sit easy; and at another it was waging a wordy war with the passers by. She fluttered, and ruffled round her bevy, with all the peevish irritability of an old wet-nurse hen, placed in charge of a family of graceless young ducks, who need all her advice and attention, to keep them from danger.

After winding our way through the

town, we at length came to the lodge of Blue Coat,* the chief of this village. He had nothing of the stern coldness of the leader of the Grand Pawnees. He attended personally and assiduously to our comfort—assisting even in unloading, and bringing in our baggage. When this was finished, he seated himself and opened a conversation, through the interpreter. There was an intelligence in his remarks, and an ease in his manners, which almost made his guests forget they were conversing with a wild, untutored savage.

It was not long before the lodge became crowded. The old warriors, moved with a hushed step, across the building, and

* The name of Blue Coat, is given to the chief of the Republican Pawnees on account of his wearing a blue camblet coat. He is proud of the title and prefers it to his Indian one. He is much more refined in his manners and ideas than the rest of his nation, and is considered by the traders, and his own people, the very *beau ideal* of an Indian warrior.

listened, to our conversation. Occasionally, some distinguished brave stalked in. There was a great difference between his manners, and those of the less noted warriors. The latter, stole quietly into the lodge, taking their stations in some remote and retired nook, as if they entertained a doubt of their privilege of entry. But as to the former, the bold and lofty carriage; the swelling chest; the uplifted head; the slightly expanded nostril; the keen searching eye, which flashed daringly around, showed him to be one who owned no ruler, and who knew that none in that assembly, would dare dispute his will. He would take his seat in the most conspicuous part of the lodge, and gaze calmly, and silently upon the strangers.

It was not long before messengers came from different lodges, inviting us to feasts, which had been prepared in honour of our

arrival. We had learned by this time, that there was no escape from the invitations of an Indian host, so we followed the guide, who led us to the dwelling of the second chief.

We found him seated upon a small leather mat. He was a fat, oily fellow, with a jolly, good-natured face. Still its expression was tempered by that gravity, which, from long habit, has become almost natural to the race, and proverbial among the whites.

Around him were lounging about a dozen Indians. Some, reclining with their backs against the pillars supporting the roof, with their eyes half closed, were smoking their stone pipes. Some were lying half asleep upon the clay floor, with their feet within a few inches of the fire; and others were keeping up a sleepy song.

At a short distance from the fire, half a

dozen squaws were pounding corn, in large mortars,* and chattering vociferously at the same time. In the farther part of the building, about a dozen naked children, with faces almost hid by their bushy, tangled hair, were rolling and wrestling upon the floor, occasionally causing the lodge to echo to their childish glee. In the back ground, we could perceive some half a dozen shaggy, thievish-looking wolf-dogs, skulking among the hides and bundles, in search of food, and gliding about with the air of dogs, who knew that they had no business there.

* The mortar is in universal use among the uncivilized tribes, answering the purpose of a mill. The hollow is formed, by kindling a fire upon the top of a block of wood, into which it gradually sinks itself, until it forms a sort of bowl. The cavity is then cleansed from the coal-black, and is fit for use.

These mortars are generally a foot in diameter, and about eight inches deep. Corn is pulverised in them, by using a billet of wood as a pestle.

Upon our entering, the lounging Indians roused themselves from the floor; the smokers woke from their reveries, and the dogs slunk out of sight. The women and children, however, went on as before, the former pounding and chattering, and the latter frolicking over the floor. When we had seated ourselves, a large bowl of boiled buffalo flesh was placed before us, and signs made for us to fall to. The chief himself acted as master of ceremonies. He thrust his hands into the bowl, and turned over and over the heap of smoking meat, selecting the best morsels, and welcoming us with warmest expressions of friendship. Several times, appearing to be annoyed by the noise and clamour of his wives, he turned round, and let out a volley of angry words, which, however, they treated with no attention. There is but little doubt that he was a hen-pecked husband, for with all his jovial appearance, there was a cowering look

about his eye, when he met the vinegar glance of one or two of his oldest wives.

Before we had finished with him, half a dozen different messengers had assembled in the lodge, waiting for us to follow them to the abode of some of the other chiefs. It is customary for the guest, when he is unable to dispose of the whole provision placed before him, to send what is left to his own quarters. The duty of carrying it, is generally entrusted to one of the junior members of the family, who when departing upon his errand, receives a particular caution from the squaws to be careful and bring back the bowl.

It was near sunset when we finished our visits. We had gone from lodge to lodge, followed by a crowd of men, women, and children, until we had visited nearly half the dwellings in the village. Our receptions were different, according to the dispositions of our hosts. Some were stern and solemn in their demeanour, and others

as sociable, and even lively as the whites. In some of the lodges, the females were of an acid temper, and to these our presence was not as agreeable as we could have wished. They made no hesitation in speaking their minds to the half-breed interpreter, who in turn, with iron gravity, translated the whole to us, without abating an epithet, or softening a single peppery expression.

When we emerged, we found a small crowd collected in front, which drew back as we appeared. Curious as they were, there was nothing troublesome or forward in their mode of gratifying their curiosity. The children followed at a distance. The older Indians would mark the route which we must take, and then hurrying on, would seat themselves in some situation, where the whole party must pass in review before them. There was none of the prying, meddling spirit which is shown among the whites.

We had scarcely reached the lodge of

the chief, and were congratulating ourselves that the eating part of the business was terminated, when the heavy bear-skin which hung over the mouth, was flapped back, and a boy came across to the place where the Interpreter was sitting. This immediately caused us to suspect that another feast was on foot, and we were making for the door, when we were arrested by the Interpreter, who was too much of an Indian not to relish these eating parties. He shouted out, that three of us had been invited to attend at the lodge of one of the older warriors, who had prepared something which he thought would be more acceptable than buffalo flesh and corn. Although but little inclined to attempt any thing in the way of eating, still we determined to accompany him, for we were curious to see what new article of food, could be raked up in the village, where every soul seemed to live on buffalo flesh and corn.

Following our guide, therefore, after a dark walk we reached the place of invitation.

The interior of the lodge was illumined by the light of a bright fire, burning cheerily in the centre. In front of it was seated the warrior who had invited us. He was an old man with a bottle nose, and a most ponderous corporation; and when seated behind it with his feet doubled under him after the Turkish fashion, he looked like a large sphere.

Upon our entrance, after sundry puffs and heaves, he rose to his feet, and welcomed us, pointing out seats upon several mats which had been placed for us, at his side. He then told his squaw, whose leanness was in proportion to his rotundity, to place before us the article to be disposed of. We watched her narrowly as she moved to a large kettle hanging over the fire. There was something in it of a reddish-yellow colour. What could

it be? We had never fallen upon any article of that description before. The squaw seized upon a long, sharp-pointed stick, and commenced spearing into the pot; but at every attempt the active occupant contrived to dodge from her weapon, in spite of her efforts. However, it is an old adage, that “perseverance conquers all difficulties,” and at length she struck the object of her search, and drew out, impaled upon the point of her weapon, a large boiled *pumpkin*. This she immediately commenced dividing in strips.

While the ceremony of spearing had been going on, we watched with some curiosity, to see what all this trouble was to produce; but when the pumpkin made its appearance, the expression of countenances was most ruefully changed. I looked round towards my companions. Their eyes were fixed with silent agony upon the preparing feast. There was no retreat—it must be eaten; and we were the persons who were

doomed to do it. I had hoped to derive a little comfort from them. I had hoped too, that they might relish a sodden and water-soaked pumpkin ; and that under cover of their appetites, I might escape unobserved. The expression, however, of their faces forbade the idea, and I determined to perform my share of the mastication, in a manner creditable to a civilized man.

We fell to desperately, therefore, under the vigilant eye of our fat host, who was continually plying us with fresh pieces, according to the laws of Indian hospitality, and to refuse which would be regarded as a slight. How we managed to get through that vegetable feast, I can hardly say ; it was one of the severest trials of the whole of our campaign ; yet we did get through with it, and emerged from the lodge in safety.

When we returned to the abode of the chief we found it crowded. Groups were squatting in every direction, wrapped in

their robes, indulging in a low, muttered conversation. This was occasionally broken by a deep, emphatic exclamation, which always bursts with a convulsive sound from the chest of an Indian, when engaged in a debate of some interest. But upon our return the conversation gradually flagged, and their sole occupation was to sit, with their eyes fastened upon us, as we were collected round the fire.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Doctor's Adventure.—Indian Dirge.

WHEN we had at first collected together in the chief lodge, we found that one of the party, Dr. M——, was not present. There were many conjectures as to his absence, but after a while he made his appearance. He was considerably out of breath, and related to us an adventure which he had just met with, or rather which he had forced himself into. He had remained in the lodge after we left it, to attend at our last feast. Having nothing in particular to employ him, he slapped his white beaver, which turned up all around, upon the top of his head, girded his deer-skin hunting shirt closely around him, and thrusting his hand into

his breeches-pocket, set out upon a voyage of discovery. He had not travelled far before his attention was attracted by a low chanting song, proceeding from one of the lodges which stood a little apart from the others, and near the edge of the bluff, overlooking the river.

Without a moment's hesitation, he walked towards it, entered the low, funnel shaped mouth, and peeped over the bear-skin which hung before the inner entrance, opening immediately into the lodge.

A large fire was burning cheerfully in the centre. Over it hung a kettle which was kept constantly stirred by an old Indian, dressed in a buffalo robe, whitened with chalk, and ornamented with hieroglyphic symbols. As he stirred he hummed a low chant, occasionally raising his voice until he caused it to sound loudly through the whole building, and then again sinking it, until it reached the ear of the listener, in low and almost inaudible mur-

murs. There was something wild, and rather forbidding in the features of this individual.

A few steps from the fire, lay two forms, completely covered by a heavy buffalo robe; and bending over these stood another Indian, dressed similar to the first. He too, was humming a low song, at intervals dancing to a slow measure round the robe.

The doctor suspected that these were Medecin-Men,* and that they were per-

* Every tribe of Indians has its Medecin-Men. They are a kind of priest or prophet. Their influence, however, is very variable, and depends upon the popularity which they may have acquired with the nation. As long as they confine their prophecies to those events, which they know will be agreeable, so long are they regarded with high veneration; but as soon as they commence predictions of evil—or attempt to reveal unpalatable truths, their influence wanes, themselves are shunned, and their predictions scorned.

forming some of the miraculous cures, which they boast of in the village, and which give them a reputation for superior sanctity among the credulous Indians, who believe them to hold communion with the Great Spirit. Their ability to perform these cures, arises frequently, from their superior knowledge, of the hidden medicinal virtues of different herbs. By jumbling with their healing art, an unintelligible species of mystic mummary, and by pretending to hold a direct intercourse with the Deity, the cure of their patients is attributed more to his immediate interference, than to any virtue of the medicines which they have received.

After humming round them, the Medecin raised the edge of the robe, exposing the naked heads and shoulders of two old,

They are also skilled in the virtues of herbs, and act as physicians in healing the sick. From this they have derived the name of Medecin, (signifying in French, physician.)

shrivelled squaws. The person at the fire, then reached to the other a large dipper, filled with part of the contents of the kettle, which was greedily swallowed by the squaws. The robe was then thrown over them, and again the Medecin commenced his hum and dance.

Now the Doctor was a curious man, and although he saw every thing that was going on in the inside of the lodge, as distinctly as if he had been there himself, still he was determined to see more. For a moment he paused to reflect, whether it would be prudent to intrude upon these mystic ceremonies, and risk incurring the anger of such influential persons, as he knew these Medecin-men to be. But prudence was a quality with which he was not much troubled; so without more hesitation he kicked up the bear-skin, and stepped boldly into the lodge, in front of the two priests.

For a moment they gazed at him, as if

they doubted their senses. Their eyes flashed fire, and raising their voices, they made the lodge ring with their yells. At this unusual sound, the two old women raised the robe, peeped from under it, and seeing the white man, added their voices to the chorus.

After gazing for a moment, the Doctor attempted to approach the fire, but the Indians warned him back, ordering him with menacing gestures, to leave the lodge. These he pretended to misunderstand, at the same time attempting to enter into a parley with them, in order to gain as much time as possible for observation. Still they placed themselves before him, sternly ordering him to depart. He attempted to explain to them that he was a Medecin-Man in his own country, and wished to be acquainted with their secrets, and that in return he would communicate his. But it was useless ; either they did not understand him, or they did not value his in-

formation, for they persisted in their ordering him to quit the lodge. The Doctor then determining, at all events, to obtain a look into the kettle, darted round them, and made for the fire.

There was now something of menace in their faces; and one of them rushing to the side of the lodge, seized a large club, resting against one of the pillars. The Doctor took to flight, and stopped not, until he arrived, most villanously out of wind, at the chief's lodge, where he narrated his adventure.

After this I strolled out with one of my companions. It was so late that there were few of the Indians stirring. Here and there, we encountered individuals sitting upon the high bank, gazing upon the gliding waters of the Platte. It seemed as if they were engaged in a species of devotion, for they did not heed our approach, but sat humming a low, a very low muttered song. We passed them,

and continued our course along the high bluff, looking down upon the Platte, which was dimly seen, reflecting the stars that twinkled upon its restless water. The prairie insects were piping their evening calls, and the creaking of the thousand creatures, who were hid in its long matted herbage, told that they were conscious their hour of song and revelry had come. Occasionally we heard the long howl of a wolf, softened by the distance, and now and then some serenading owl, would raise his voice from the dark fringe of trees, which drooped over the opposite bank of the river, and send forth a long quavering whoop.

We strolled along the bank for half a mile, glad to be free from the well-meant though tedious attentions of our hosts. At length, however, we turned for the purpose of retracing our steps, when our attention was attracted by a low, mournful cry, from the midst of a number of small

mounds, at a short distance, the burial ground of the village. We approached the spot so cautiously, as not to disturb the person who was stationed there. Upon the top of one of the graves, a large mound covered with grass, was lying an Indian girl. Her buffalo robe had escaped from her shoulders, and her long dishevelled black hair, was mingled with the grass of the prairie. Her bosom was resting upon the sod, and her arms extended, as if embracing the form of the being who was mouldering beneath.

Believing that she was some female belonging to the tribe, singing a dirge over the grave of some departed friend, we listened attentively to her song. At one moment, it would rise in the air with a plaintive sound, as if she was dwelling with mournful tenderness, upon the virtues of the deceased. At times, she would seem to speak of the feelings of his heart; at others, the note would seem to be one of

war, of battle; and then her song would burst from her, with the startling energy of a person, who was in the midst of the scene itself, and was acting over the feats of the silent dead. At these moments, she raised her head, and her whole frame seemed swelling with the inspiration of her theme; but in the very midst of this energetic burst of enthusiasm, the chord of some more mournful recollection would be touched, and the song would sink from its high, and ardent tone, to a note of wo, so despairing, that it appeared as if the sluices of her heart were opened, and the deep-hidden stream of her affection, was flowing out in the mournful melody.

After a short time she rose from the ground, and wrapping her robe round her, walked slowly towards the village. It was not until she was completely lost to our sight, that we left our sheltering place, and followed in the direction which she had taken. We had heard the Indian

dirge sung before by different females, of the tribe, but as we considered them mere pieces of formality, we had passed by, without heeding them. But in this lonely being, there was an air of deep desolation, as she lay upon the grave, and a hopeless, despairing tone, in her low, melodious voice, that laid bare the recesses of a withered heart.

We were so much interested in her, that we had accurately noted her appearance, and now hurried towards our lodge, with the intention of finding out her history from our interpreter—a matter of no great difficulty, as the history of every individual of the village is known to all. We found the half-breed interpreter sitting in front of the fire, wrapped in his blanket-coat, with his elbow resting upon his knee, and his hand supporting his chin. There was an air of iron gravity and even sternness in his deep-marked features that denoted a man not prone to

yield to womanish emotion. We walked up to him, and by means of a Frenchman, (for he spoke no English) inquired the history of the girl—at the same time narrating the scene in the prairie.

If it had been in the nature of his face to wear a more scornful expression than it usually did, the smile of contempt which passed over his weather-beaten features, as we related our story, would have added to it. For a moment, he seemed surprised—then added, that she was a squaw, who resided in the adjoining lodge, and but a short time before, he had heard her say to her mother, that as she had nothing else to do, she believed she would go and take a *bawl* over her dead brother's grave. He had been killed five years before.

Here was a waste of sympathy. We were vexed that we had suffered our feelings to be enlisted in the mock misery of this girl, who was merely performing a

customary mummary. There was an expression of enjoyment in the keen eye of the half-breed, as he watched the disappointed expression of our faces. A grim smile played over his reddish-brown face, and I believe if he had ever been guilty of such an action, he would have indulged in a loud explosion of merriment.

At that moment, the broad voice of our black cook, announced that the supper was ready. Discarding both the girl, and her griefs, from our minds, we seated ourselves upon the floor, preparatory to commencing the almost hopeless task, of masticating a supper of dried buffalo's flesh, which had been boiled for only two hours.

When we had finished, it was late in the evening—the Indians had ceased moving through the lodge, and wrapping themselves in their shaggy robes, had composed their forms upon the clay floor, for slumber.

The servants now busied themselves in spreading out our bear-skins. This completed, each retired to his couch, and in a short time a dead silence reigned throughout the building.

CHAPTER IX.

An Old Warrior.—Indian Dogs.—A Night Scene.

ABOUT midnight I awoke; it was intensely cold, so I rose up and picked my way over prostrated forms to the fire. An old Indian was seated by it; his hair was snowy white, and hung in long locks upon his shoulders. There were several scars traced upon his face, and even by that faint light, the marks of deep wounds were visible upon his breast. His robe had fallen from his shoulders, leaving bare the withered wreck, of what must once have been an Herculean frame. I did not know him, nor could he have ranked among their chiefs. His cheek was resting in the palm of his hand; his eyes were intently fixed upon the burning brands which flickered

up a dying, broken blaze. In his right hand he held a small piece of wood, with which he raked together the coals, though seemingly unconscious of what he was doing. In front of him lay an uncouth-looking tomahawk, made of wood, and across it his otter-skin pouch, and stone pipe: the symbols of war and peace thrown together, in a manner which seemed to denote that to their owner, the day of strife was past. His look was fixed upon the brands, but his mind, busied in its own wanderings, took no note of the things before his eyes. Could he be meditating upon the probable results of the coming of the white men among them? Could he be sitting there buried in his own musings, and prophet-like, looking through the dim vista of futurity? Could he see his own chivalric race, gradually withering at the approach of the whites, and the descendants of those, whose hearts now beat as free as the eagle's, crawling

over the earth, a stigma to their name, and a curse to themselves? I could not prevent these thoughts from stealing over me, as I sat opposite to him, gazing upon his face, so noble and dignified, even in its ruin. Upon my first approach, he had not observed me, but after a short time, he raised his head, and perceiving me, reached out his hand, while a friendly smile played over his face. Then pointing to his scars, he endeavoured by signs to narrate to me an account of the different war expeditions, in which these had been received. Each wound had a tale of its own, and each scar told of a different battle. After spending some time in telling his story, he lighted his pipe, and first drawing a few puffs he passed it to me with the usual word of politeness, (Loo-vah.)* I puffed for a few moments, and

* This is a word more frequently used than any other in the language. As far as I was able to learn,

returned it to him, he then inhaled a few draughts of the smoke, and again reached it to me, and I, after again smoking, reached it to him. This operation of smoking and passing it to each other, continued until the pipe was empty; then knocking the ashes from its bowl, he raised himself upon his feet, and taking up his pouch and tomahawk, drew his buffalo robe over his head, and left the lodge. Upon being deserted by my companion, I looked around upon the muffled forms, thickly strewed over the clay floor, with that strange feeling of loneliness, which is experienced by a person, the only being awake, among a hundred sleeping forms, and which is peculiarly strong in a place where every individual is a stranger, perhaps an enemy. The lodge was about sixty feet in diameter, and seen by the

it had no particular meaning, but signified—almost any thing.—In fact it comprises about half of the language.

flickering, uncertain light of the fire, it had a wild appearance. The stern, silent countenances of the sleeping warriors, as they reclined with their backs resting against the pillars which supported the lodge, reminded me of the eastern tale, in which a whole city of living beings, were converted into statues. Their features were at rest, they were not now the mirrors which reflected the passions of their hearts. Even those passions were slumbering, but still, their heavy lines were left, with an enduring mark upon their brows. If those stone-like faces wore so savage a character, when nature had thrown her own calm over them, how truly fearful must they have been in the day of battle, when every frenzied feeling was at its height, and every demon passion was ruling with relentless sway. As to those who were lying upon the floor, their sleep was death-like—it seemed dreamless.

The gaunt Indian dogs were prowling

stealthily through the building. They knew that their hour of freedom had come, and with every leaping blaze of the embers, I could see them scattered throughout the lodge. There must have been nearly fifty of them in full motion, yet there was not a sound to be heard. They wound their way through the sleeping Indians, with the cautious and practised step of veteran burglars—too well acquainted with the wakeful habits of their masters, not to be silent in their doings; and too much in the habit of stealing, to be able to resist the temptation to plunder. Occasionally they paused, and cast a doubting look upon me, as I sat watching their movements. They however came to the conclusion that I was a stranger, and from my short stay, was not aware that it was the custom of every Indian, to bestow a bountiful share of wholesome kicks, upon every dog that came in his path, as a punishment for the thefts which he had

already committed, and as payment in advance for his future transgressions. While I was watching their movements I was startled by a loud whine, which seemed to proceed from the roof of the lodge. At that sound there was a general scamper towards the mouth of the lodge, for they were certain, that the cry would awaken the savages, and that flight was their only safety. I had turned at the moment of the noise, to ascertain the cause of it. At the top of the lodge, and about ten feet from the ground, was a large dog, suspended by his teeth to a flitch of bacon, which had been hung up to the rafters to keep it in safety. Upon coming into the lodge, the animal had espied this, and mounting upon a high pile formed by our baggage, had sprung out at it, as it hung. He had been successful in his leap, and had buried his teeth in the meat. But this accomplished, he could do nothing more—he was dangling full ten feet from the ground;

his only supporters were his jaws, which were fastened into the end of the bacon. He dared not let loose his hold, and he was equally certain he could not maintain it. In this predicament, he raised his voice, in a long, low, plaintive howl. Scarce had the sound escaped him, before a dozen clubs were clattering against his ribs, and as many clamorous voices raised in the hue and cry against him. With a loud yell, relaxing his jaws, he landed upon the head of an old Indian, who was dozing beneath, in defiance of the howls of the dog, and the clamour of his foes. The animal did not pause, but gaining his feet, scampered across the building, and made his escape amidst a shower of missiles of all descriptions.

CHAPTER X.

Leaving Republican Village.—Prairie between that and Tappage Village.—Reception by Tappages.—Departure.—White Cranes.—Black Chief of the Loups.—Reception.—Chief's Lodge.—Soldier Chief's Feast.

THE next morning about ten o'clock, we set off for the village of the Tappage Pawnees, situated upon the Loup fork of the Platte, about eleven miles farther up the river. As we left the town, a crowd of men, women and children followed us, in the hope of obtaining presents. The chief too, escorted us out. He was a princely man. His head was shorn, excepting the scalp-lock; his face was free from paint; a long string of wampum, the only ornament he ever wore, hung from his neck; a blue blanket covered one

shoulder, leaving bare his high, prominent chest, and the sinewy arm which curbed the restless movement of his fretted horse. He had been used to the saddle from childhood, and now governed his impatient animal, with the calm controul of a practised rider.

There is nothing upon which the Indians pride themselves, more than their horsemanship. Almost living in the saddle, they are as much at ease, when mounted, as when sitting upon the floor of their own lodge. Many a time, I have seen two or three village urchins, beset some unfortunate horse, while quietly dozing and ruminating, upon the prairie. After sundry coaxings and efforts, they would succeed in mounting upon his back, and then without saddle or bridle, and with a whoop and yell, that terrified the startled steed into a full gallop, they would scamper madly along, clinging to his mane, and to each other, with a tenacity which

would have astonished any one but an Indian.

After accompanying us about a mile, the chief returned, followed by a number of his warriors. The rest joined our band, and travelled in company, for the purpose of witnessing our reception by their rival village. Our pace was slow, being regulated by that of the oxen, who toiled painfully along in the rear.

The prairie was beginning to show the effects of the autumn frost, and the grass wore a blighted, withered look. The sun shone red and lurid through the hazy atmosphere, denoting what at this season of the year, is called among the whites, Indian summer. Not a breeze rustled the dry grass, or rippled the swift, glassy waters of the Platte. Every thing was quiet, except the loud voice of the teamster, expostulating with his oxen; or an occasional crack, from the whip of Joseph, as he urged forward his mules.

Now and then, we came upon large droves of horses, belonging to the Republican village. They were roving along the banks of the Platte, in bands of several hundred, prancing, and capering as wildly, as if they were still free, upon their own prairies. Upon our approach, they raised their heads, and gazed fearlessly upon us. Two or three of the largest, then left the herd, and slowly approached. For a moment they remained motionless, then with a loud snort, flinging their heels in the air, they dashed back to the drove, which sped off, with a sound like thunder. Occasionally too, we would pass a small hillock, upon which an Indian stood motionless, watching our movements. There is a classic air about them, when seen at a distance, with their robes flowing in graceful drapery round them, their forms drawn fully up, and their outstretched arms supported by their long spears. As these scouts thus gazed,

so calm and motionless, I almost imagined they regarded us with the despair of persons, who knew that their fall was near, but that resistance was hopeless.

While we were yet several miles distant from the village, we observed mounted Indians, driving before them large droves of horses, to be ready for service in the wild ceremony of our reception.

The town of the Tappage Pawnees is situated upon a broad plain overlooking the Platte. It is the smallest of all the Pawnee villages, and contains about a thousand inhabitants. The most of them were now poured out upon the prairie, where we could distinguish them in the distance, drawn up in a motionless body, waiting for the signal to dash forward to meet us.

When we approached sufficiently near, it was given. Once more, we beheld them coming surge-like upon us, and changing their course at the very moment when our ruin seemed inevitable. Again

the dizzying evolutions of the troop passed before us. The wild neighing of the horses, mingled in confusion—with the thunder of their hoofs—with the yells and whoops of the Indians, and the clashing sound of their bows and tomahawks. When this was concluded, the ceremony of presenting horses was performed. Half an hour brought us to the town, where as before we found every being on the look out for our coming, and every preparation made, to receive us in a manner worthy of the nation. There is a sameness in Indian customs and habits, which render description tedious. Suffice it to say, that we were received by the chief and his people with all the kindness and hospitality which their means afforded.

About ten o'clock on the next morning we mounted our horses and clattered through the village on our route for the town of the Pawnee Loups, situated about five miles farther up the river. This is

the wildest of the four villages, owing perhaps to the savage nature of its chief.

We rode in a straggling string along the low, irregular prairie. The Otoe Indians skirted along the bank of the river. Those of the soldiers, who were not engaged with the teams, reconnoitered the different pools of water, in hopes of coming unawares upon some pensive duck, who might be dozing upon their surfaces. Here and there we observed a broken patch of corn, at the bottom of some ravine, where the washed earth was of so soft a texture as to require but little trouble in cultivation. Occasionally too, we passed a clump of dwarf trees, closely grouped together over the brink of a spring, or run of water. Otherwise the prairie was bare of forest, and covered only with long withered grass.

When we had ridden about half the distance, a number of Otoes came scampering up, to tell us that there were about

a dozen white cranes, standing upon a sand-bar in the Platte. This incident, trivial as it may seem, created quite an excitement among the troop. Half a dozen loaded rifles were handed from the wagons, and as many soldiers started off followed by a troop of Indians, with their arrows ready fitted to their bows, in case the fire-arms of the whites should fail. But all this preparation was useless, for when they arrived within about three hundred yards of the bank, one of the birds, who, like an old man, on a cold day, was standing with his head closely snugged up against his breast, and gazing in moralizing mood upon the swift water, suddenly shot out a neck, three feet long, and turned a quick and steady eye upon the approaching hunters. He gazed a moment, then taking a step, and slowly raising his wings until their tips nearly met over his back, he rose from the earth, as if by mere volition, uttering a shrill cry which brought after

him, his startled comrades. As they rose, a shower of bullets whistled after them, without disturbing their flight. They slowly mounted in air floating like a snowflake over the silver Platte. For a few moments they lingered over its shining bosom, as if loth to leave their resting place; but after wheeling in several widely extended circles, they soared to an immense height, and then took a steady course to the eastward and were lost to the sight.

It was not long before we reached a high bluff in the prairie, from whence we descried the village of the Pawnee Loups, about half a mile distant, but we saw no signs of preparation to receive us. A single Indian alone appeared, galloping at full speed over the prairies. His horse was of a dark cream colour, fierce, and powerful. To his bit was attached a scalp, consisting of the whole upper part of a human head, the hair of which must have been full two feet in length, nearly reach-

ing the ground. The horseman proved to be the Black Chief of the Loups. When he had come within a few yards of us, he sprang from his horse, and reached out the bridle to one of our soldiers to hold.

His face was far more swarthy than that of any Indian we had ever seen; but it was not more dark than the nature of the man. He was perfectly naked, with the exception of a pair of leggings of dressed buffalo hide, worn apparently for the sake of displaying a profusion of scalp-locks, with which they were heavily fringed. His frame was not large, but muscular and finely formed. His high chest looked as hard as rock, and the tread of his moccasined foot, was as firm as iron. His whole figure was one, which for fine proportion, and strength, might have served a sculptor, but his scowling face marred the beauty of his person. Yet he had his virtues. He was true to his word, and faith-

ful to his friends; but upon his enemies he let loose every evil passion. The old and the young; the defenceless mother, and the harmless child, alike fell beneath his war-club.

He advanced towards us, and grasped our hands with a grip which would have done credit to a vice; then turning round, he awaited the coming of his warriors, who had now assembled in the prairie.

Minute after minute passed, but still there were no signs of approach. The brow of the Black Chief grew troubled, and his eye darkened, at the delay. Still the minutes passed on, and the band remained motionless. The eye of the chief was nearly hid beneath his scowling brow, and he gnawed at his under lip, with a species of savage calmness. After a moment he called one of the Pawnees, who had accompanied us from the last village, and sent him forward with some instructions to his warriors. The Indian bound-

ed towards the band, but before he had gone more than one quarter of the distance, a loud yell burst from them, and with a heavy, resistless motion, they bore down upon us. The Indian who had started, fled back to the party. At the moment that the cry sounded from the Pawnee Loups, the chief raised his head, and sent up a long, shrill scream in answer; then springing on his horse, he sat motionless, watching with a keen eye, their every movement. They had approached within a hundred yards of the party, when he again raised his voice in a loud whoop, and waving his arm, they separated and rushed to right and left, round us.

But few horses were presented by this village, as a party of Sioux Indians had stolen down upon them but a few weeks before, and swept off nearly one-third of the horses belonging to the town. The chief gave as an excuse, that he had gam-

bled away nearly all that he possessed.* This was in fact the truth ; for we afterwards learned that the horse which bore him, was the only one left, of a large number that he owned but a short time before.

Upon reaching the village we found, as usual, crowds of women and children, curious to see us, though they did not

* One of the principal games of the Pawnees, and the one on which the most gambling is carried on, is played by means of a small ring and a long javelin. This ring is about four inches in diameter ; and the object of the player, is to hurl his javelin through the ring, while it is sent rolling over the ground, with great speed, by one of his companions in the game. The javelin is filled with barbs nearly the whole length, so that when it has once passed partly through the ring, it cannot slide back. This is done to ascertain how far it went before it struck the edges of the ring, and the farther the cast the more it counts in favour of the one who hurled it. It is practised by the children, young men, and chiefs. The first gamble for single arrows—the second for a bow and quiver—and the last for horses.

press round us as in the other villages. This was owing to the presence of the chief, who rode by our side, and who, in fierce tones, ordered the crowd of gazers to a distance. A concourse had assembled, too, around the entrance of his lodge; but upon our approach, they drew back, and permitted us to pass freely. In the inside we found a few of the principal warriors, who alone had been admitted; the women and the rabble had been prohibited from entering, and they dared not disobey orders. There was a feast, as usual, but we ate little, as we knew what was to follow. Scarce had we finished, before a little urchin was in attendance, to conduct us to the lodge of the Soldier Chief, the second brave in the village. We found him seated at a little distance from the fire, awaiting our arrival. As we entered, he rose, and presented to Mr. E—— a large buffalo robe, upon which was painted a hieroglyphic account

of his warlike deeds. After this he seated himself, and commenced describing the different fights, and explaining the meaning of the various symbols.

He was a tall, thin man, with a sharp muscular face, and a deep-sunk eye, which glittered in its socket like that of a basilisk. There was no spare flesh about his frame, but all was brawn, and sinew. His look was that of a person formed for the endurance of great, and continued toil, and his hardened face showed that he had weathered exposures of all descriptions.

He apologised to the commissioner for not having come out with the rest of the tribe to welcome him—being at bitter enmity with the chief, and refusing on all occasions to act in concert with him.

A large bowl of boiled corn was then placed before us, and each of us furnished by the Soldier's wife with a small dipper of buffalo horn. Having partaken of the mess as sparingly as the laws of Indian po-

liteness would permit, we took our leave. After we had left the lodge, the Indian agent who accompanied us related the following account of a murder which had occurred but a few months previous, and which was the origin of the bitter feud between the Soldier and the Black Chief.

CHAPTER XI.

The Shian Captive.

DURING the month of May previous, business had called Major Dougherty to the Otoe Agency, on the Missouri. One morning, while there, a wearied messenger made his appearance. He had been sent by a half-breed from the Pawnee village, with intelligence that the Loups had taken a Shian woman prisoner, and intended to burn her at the stake, in the course of a few days.*

The Agent determined if possible to

* The Pawnee Loups are the only Pawnee tribe that yet retain this custom. They offer their victim to the Great Star, (the planet Venus.) The prisoner is, if possible, kept in ignorance of his intended fate, until led out to die. The sacrifices are generally offered in the spring of the year, to insure a bountiful harvest.

save her. Having made a few hurried preparations, he set off with five companions. A journey of three days brought them to the village. The news of their visit and the object of it had preceded them, and they experienced an ungracious reception. No hand was extended in friendship ; no voice uttered the words of welcome.

As the little band passed through the village, the tops of the lodges were crowded with women and children, and an immense concourse was drawn up in front of the dwelling of the chief. They forced their way through the fierce and sullen mob, and cleared a passage to the entrance.

Here stood the chief. *His* welcome, and *his* alone was cordial. He ushered the Agent into his dwelling, nor did he turn a deaf ear to his request, that the Shian female might be spared. He told him, however, that *he* had no power to free her, and that all he could do would

be to assemble a council of the nation, and lay the matter before *them*; that he would use his influence; and that if they could be prevailed upon, the captive should be saved. He accordingly despatched messengers in every direction, to call a council of the chiefs and braves of the nation, and they assembled that very night. They took their seats around the lodge in silence, with faces which gave but little hope of a merciful result to their deliberations. In the centre sat the Agent and his companions; and near them the Shian captive. She had been led in passively, and made no appeal, for she had no hope. It seemed as if every sense and feeling had been paralyzed, by the horror of her approaching fate.

The Agent rose and stated his object to the meeting. He was a firm man; he had spent much of his life among the savages; but it needed all his resolution, and all his knowledge of the Indian character,

to effect the desired object. As he spoke there was no friendly look returned; no sound of approbation uttered. They listened with a calm, cold air, and he finished his address, conscious that he had gained *no* point, nor enlisted the friendly feeling of a single breast, in the whole of the dark circles which surrounded him.

When he ended, the chief, who during the whole time had been seated quietly at the foot of a pillar, rose. He was in favour of releasing the captive, and of sending her off with the whites. He spoke with the wild energy, and vehement gesticulation customary among the Indians. During his speech there was a silence—a portentous silence in the lodge. But when he had finished, a hundred throats yelled out cries of anger, and a hundred eyes gleamed fiercely upon him. It was not, however, in his nature to yield. Incensed at the opposition to his will, he raised his voice, until it even drowned the

noise of the whole assembly, and swore by the Great Spirit, that she should be delivered to the whites; and he dared any man of the whole assembly, to offer her the slightest injury.

All quailed before the master spirit, and bowed to the superior energy of his nature. One after another they left the lodge, until the chief, the captive, and the whites were its sole occupants. In a few moments the chief went out also. In an hour he returned, followed by two armed warriors, whom he stationed in the opposite part of the lodge, placing the squaw between them. Upon being asked the reason of this precaution, he mentioned that the Soldier Chief, instigated by one of the Medecin-men of the village, had created some disturbance, which caused him to fear for the life of the captive, and that these men were placed to protect her. He evaded all farther inquiries, and shortly after left the lodge.

The whites stretched themselves upon their bear-skins, but scarcely closed their eyes that night. The guards kept watch on each side of the captive; motionless, but sleepless. On the following morning, the horses were saddled in front of the lodge, and the party having armed themselves, prepared to mount. The chief led out the captive, and forcing back the angry crowd, he placed her upon a horse, between two of the whites; at the same time cautioning them to lose no time in leaving the village. They accordingly attempted to push forward; but the crowd hemmed them in so closely, that it was with difficulty they prevented their horses from trampling them down. This throng continued to press round them, until they reached the lodge of the Soldier Chief. As they passed it, a bow twanged from within, and an arrow whizzing through the air, was buried up to the feather in the side of the Shian captive. With a

loud scream, she tossed her arms in the air, and fell forward upon the neck of the horse. At the same moment, a loud roar rose from the multitude; and two Indians seizing the bridle, jerked the horse onwards. The crowd opened to let them pass; but before the whites could follow, it had again closed. At that moment, the Agent heard a loud whoop behind him, and turning, beheld the Black Chief, and the Soldier, grappled in a desperate conflict, while the followers of each, stood by, watching the result. They were both unarmed, and the issue was to depend upon their bodily strength alone. They were well matched, but the Black Chief had the advantage, for he had a deadly gripe upon the throat of his opponent.

The Agent knew, however, that whichever might be victorious, the conflict would terminate fatally to himself. He therefore sprang from his horse, and succeeded with the aid of several chiefs, in dragging them

apart, and put an end to the contest. He then turned to look for the captive. She had been borne off by the crowd, who were rushing over the prairie with deafening yells.

Still determined if possible to save her, he sprang upon his horse and galloped after them. But he was too late. They had torn the wretched being to pieces, smeared themselves with her gore, and were whirling her head and quivering limbs in the air.

From that time, there had been a settled hatred, between the Black Chief and the Soldier. They spoke not; they entered not the lodges of each other, and acted no more in concert than if they had been two leaders of separate villages.

CHAPTER XII.

Exploit of the Black Chief.—Alarm in the Village.

WE were sitting late one evening, in the lodge of the chief, around the fire. There were about thirty Indians present, some were lying upon the floor, and others sitting huddled up, wrapped in their robes, with their unbending gaze fixed upon our faces. The servants were spreading our bear-skins and blankets, preparatory to our retiring for the night. While thus situated, the interpreter, after dwelling upon the desperate nature of our host, related to us the following anecdote, illustrative of his character.

About a year previous to this, the Black Chief had by some means or other fallen into disgrace with his people. They shunned him, and refused to admit him to

their councils, until by some heroic action, he should wipe off the stain upon his name. He knew that there was no resource; that the blood of an enemy alone, would retrieve his fame. He determined, therefore, to shed it, in a manner which even the most desperate of his own tribe, would not have dreamed of, and which would strike a salutary terror of his name, into the hearts of his hostile neighbours.

Early one morning, taking his bow and quiver, he left his lodge, and started on foot for the Crow village, about two hundred miles distant. He set out upon his journey, without attendants, and singing his death-song. His tribe watched until he was out of sight; they knew not where he was going; he might return soon, in a day, in a month, and perhaps never. They knew his desperate character; they knew that his errand was one of blood; and they doubted not, that if he returned, he would bring home trophies, sufficient

to place him once more, at the head of their councils.

On the evening of the fourth day, he reached the Crow village; but waited at a short distance, concealed in a prairie, until it was completely dark. He then entered the village, and passed through its very centre. Several of the inhabitants were stirring, but the darkness was so great that they did not regard him particularly, and he passed on, undetected. At length he came to a lodge, a little apart from the rest, with a horse standing at the door, tied by a halter of buffalo hair. Peering over the bear-skin, which hung before the inner entrance; he beheld two Indians reclining in front of a fire. A few feet from them, a squaw was pounding corn, in a large wooden mortar; and at a little distance, was a child sleeping on the floor. The backs of all were turned towards the warrior, and he hesitated not a moment how to act. Drawing forth his

knife with his left hand, and grasping his tomahawk in his right, he dashed into the building. With two blows, he clove the skulls of the men; he sheathed his knife in the heart of the woman, and dashed out the brains of the child. Having scalped his victims he mounted the horse at the door, and started off. He had gone but a few paces, before he observed an Indian making for the lodge. He felt a strong hankering after his scalp also; but there were several other Indians at hand, and he feared detection. Resisting therefore the powerful temptation, he turned away and galloped for the prairie. Scarcely had he got clear of the village, when it rang with yells and screams; and in a few moments, he heard the clattering of hoofs, and the sound of voices in hot pursuit. In a night chase, however, the pursued has always the advantage; he has but to dash forward, while his foes, must either stop to keep his trace, or follow at random.

So it was with the Black Chief; and long before morning his horse had borne him, far beyond the sound of pursuit.

He reached his village in safety; related his tale, and displayed his scalps. They hesitated not a moment, to believe him, for in recounting his exploits, an Indian never lies. He was received with honour; and once more resumed his seat in the councils of his nation.

This is a picture of Indian warfare—to steal like an assassin upon an unarmed enemy, and butcher him without the slightest chance of resistance. Blood is what he seeks—no matter whether from the veins of man or woman—infancy or age. A scalp is his trophy; and is alike glorious, whether silvered with age, or torn from the reeking head of a youthful warrior. With the savage, a hankering for blood, is ambition—a relentless fury in shedding it, renown.

During the whole time of the narration,

the chief, unconscious that he was the subject of discourse, sat gazing upon the fire. His face was as calm and quiet as if no evil passion had ever harboured in his bosom—as if his hand had never been stained with blood, or his ears rung to the wild scream of the dying.

The tale was scarcely finished, when we were startled by a loud outcry in the village. The next moment, the bear-skin was flung violently back; an armed Indian rushed into the lodge—shouted out a few words at the top of his lungs, and as quickly disappeared. Every savage sprang to his feet, and rushed to the door, and in an instant the lodge was deserted.

In a few moments the chief returned. Never had I seen such a change. His face which had lately been as unruffled as that of a sleeping infant, was hideously distorted. His eyes gleamed like fire, and his teeth were clenched with rage.

One of the squaws spoke to him, but he heeded her not—snatching down from a shelf his bow and arrows, and catching up his heavy war-club, he again rushed out.

The tumult grew louder. The interpreter came in and informed us, that a party of Sioux Indians had stolen into the town—opened one of the large wicker pens, and carried off about fifty Pawnee horses. They had nearly effected their retreat, when they were discovered by a young Indian, who gave the alarm, and the whole village was now in arms.

On sallying forth, we found every thing in a state of uproar. Whoops and yells, mingled with the cries of women, sounded in every direction. Horsemen were clattering through the town; band after band dashed by yelling the war-whoop. The voices of the leaders were heard above all, giving orders and cheering their followers to the pursuit. At length they disap-

peared in the darkness, and the sounds of their voices died away as they galloped over the prairie.

In about an hour they returned, and the chief made his appearance, gloomy and morose. He had taken no scalps; he had seen no enemies; no horses had been stolen; and the whole tumult had been caused by a young Pawnee, who observing one of his own tribe busily engaged in collecting his horses at an unusual hour of the night, mistook him for an enemy and gave the alarm.

Nothing farther occurred to disturb us, and retiring to our couches, we slept soundly until morning.

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Grand Pawnees.—Delegation.—Death Song.

Two days had elapsed, and we had again returned to the Grand Pawnee village. We now prepared for our return to the white settlements. Nearly two months had elapsed since the prairie had become our home, and its wild sons our fellows. We had lived in the land of the savage; we had seen, in his real character, the man of nature. We had seen him in his moments of joy, and pain; in his moments of pride and humility; in his paroxysms of excitement, when urged on by his impetuous nature; and in his hours of relaxation, when a calm was upon his burning bosom, and his passions were asleep. We

had seen him, in his home, in the midst of his family, where the gushes of his heart were unrestrained; when the feelings of the husband, and father, and all the kind impulses of nature had burst the iron fetters of habit, and resumed their empire. The illusions thrown around him by the exaggerated reports of travellers, and the fictions of poets, had been removed; and we had beheld him, as he really was; an untutored, generous, yet savage man. He had lost much of the romance with which imagination had clothed him. His faults, his vices, his crimes, now stood out in glaring colours, and threw into the shade, many of his higher qualities. Still with all his imperfections, we had learned to admire his chivalrous nature; and to look upon him while uncontaminated by communion with the whites, as among the noblest works of his Maker.

The sun rose cheerily on the morning of our departure. A crowd had assem-

bled in front of the chief's lodge, to take a last look at the band of pilgrims, who had ventured among them.

Many of the most distinguished warriors stood proudly drawn up, with their robes muffled round their folded arms, and their heads thrown back. They watched us silently, and with countenances as fixed as marble. The females were in groups; some in the area in front of the chief's abode; and others on the domelike tops of the lodges. The voice of childish glee was ringing among the crowd; and their merry games were going forward. Occasionally they would pause to watch the process of harnessing the horses before the wagons; and the next instant would resume their gambols.

A delegation of Pawnees, four from each village, had been selected to accompany us to the garrison, in order if possible, to concert a general peace, among various tribes. This delegation was joined

by many volunteers, until at length, nearly eighty were prepared to accompany us, to the terra incognita of the white man.

A smile of kindness illumined the grim face of our savage host, as he bade us farewell. The horses were saddled; the oxen were yoked, and had commenced moving onward. We were preparing to mount, when our attention was attracted by a low, and not inharmonious cry, which rose from the distant part of the village. It came nearer and nearer, sinking into a long wailing moan, in which many voices were united. At length a train of Indians emerged from behind one of the lodges. They were dressed in white buffalo robes.* They approached us slowly, still wailing out their mournful chant; and we recog-

* The white buffalo robe is so called, merely from one of its sides being whitened with chalk, in dressing it. The wool is of the same colour as that of all others, (a dark brown.)

nized them for our party of delegates, and their fellow travellers.

They were in fact singing their death-song, as is customary with all the Indian tribes, before setting out, upon any perilous expedition. It is merely a recounting of their different exploits in battle, and winds up, by taking leave of their friends and fellow townsmen. Although it is sung with an air of vast resignation, by all; and although you would think, that after it, the songster, would go to the grave, "like a lamb to the slaughter;" yet from all that I could ever learn, there are no people that have a greater antipathy to dying, than the savages, or take more trouble to keep out of harm's way.

The melancholy dirge swelled loudly as the long train moved past us; but it gradually became fainter, and fainter, as they wound their way among the distant lodges, and disappeared.

In a few moments, we were galloping over the prairie, to overtake some of the party who had preceded us. A train of Indians followed us, and the tops of the lodges were crowded.

After travelling a mile, we at last crossed the top of a ridge, and lost sight of the town.

CHAPTER XIV.

Storm.—Dog Feast.

A HEAVY storm of mingled snow and rain set in, on the day after our departure from the Pawnee village.

If there is any thing truly comfortless, it is a camp upon a rainy day. Every thing combined to add to its gloomy character. The fly of the tent, which might have afforded us protection, had been torn to tatters; and the roof of our canvas house, settled down into a bag. Through this a steady stream of water distilled, upon the centre of a board, which we had honoured with the appellation of a breakfast table. The blankets were rolled up, and piled in the middle of the tent, covered by a large bear-skin. This was nearly saturated with the drizzling moisture. A large pile of green logs, heaped up in front

of the tent, refused to burn, but yielded a bountiful supply of smoke, which the wind occasionally wafted in clouds into our canvas habitation.

The thorough drenching which they had received, seemed to have soaked all pride and dignity, out of our Indian companions. They crouched like wet poultry round the fire, shutting their eyes, and holding their breath, determined to receive some of its warmth, in defiance of the clouds of smoke which it threw into their faces. Here and there, were small groups squatting out in the prairie; each man was huddled up into a knot, with the rain pouring in streams down his shaggy robe, and dripping off into the grass. The paint was drenched from his face, and his whole demeanour so utterly changed, that it was almost impossible to recognize the proud, haughty warrior, in the dripping, bedraggled being, then crouching in the grass, beneath the pelting storm. Once or twice, some poor, half-drowned fellow,

with a desperate attempt at jovialty, struck up a song, with a come-let's-be-jolly kind of an air, which was intended to set the weather and fortune at defiance; but it was a failure. At the commencement one or two voices struck in with valorous spirit, but finding that they were not supported, they gradually sunk into silence, leaving the person who had commenced the strain, to finish it as well as he might.

Drip—drip—drip—pattered the rain into a tin bucket, placed in the tent to receive it. At length a large puddle which had collected in the rear, overflowed its banks, and stole in a small rivulet through the centre of the tent. A smothered oath from one of the party, who was seated in the very track of the water, announced its intrusion. Several of the soldiers were then sent out, with pails and shovels, and in a short time succeeded in draining a part of the pond, and digging a different outlet for its waters.

Just then the yelping of a cur was heard at a little distance, in a clump of bushes, which the Wild Horse had chosen for his residence.

“So! the dog too is a sufferer on account of the inclemency of the weather. No doubt the Wild Horse is completely drenched, and in a terrible fume.”

Another hour passed, but still the rain continued. Just then the entrance of the tent was darkened, and the Wild Horse entered. He held in his hand a large wooden bowl, filled with boiled flesh, which he placed smoking before us. We were informed that it was dog flesh, and invited to try it. The soldiers had also received a share, but without being told what it was. “What is it,” said one, taking up a small morsel, and holding it to his nose, “is it venison?”

“It tastes odd,” said another, biting in two a large piece. Several of them then commenced an attack upon the contents of their bowl.

“I don’t exactly *know* what animal this belongs to,” said one of them, who was eating heartily; “and to tell the truth, I don’t altogether like the *strange-ish* taste, there is about it.”

“Poh! what should it be,” repeated another, “but venison? and mighty tender too. I wish there was more of it; fresh meat don’t come every day upon these prairies, for the deer are getting powerful shy.”

Just then the canvas opening of the tent was pulled back, and the iron face of the interpreter was thrust in to say, that the Wild Horse wished to know, if the commissioner was pleased with the *dog’s* flesh. The soldiers overheard it, and in an instant the dish was hurled from the fire, and the gourmands made for the water, writhing and twisting their faces, as if they had been stricken by St. Vitus. The Wild Horse gazed upon them with amazement, mingled with anger; but when the interpreter explained the cause of the

tumult, his displeasure vanished, and a grim smile lighted up his hard, weather-beaten face. Then turning to his wife, (for he was attended by his better half) he called for a fresh supply of the viand, and collecting round him a group of the vagabond-looking beings, who were nestling in the grass, they soon left little else but clean bones in the bowl.

We lay for a whole day upon the banks of the Platte river, but towards sunset a bright blue streak appeared in the west, and the dark misty clouds began to drive off towards the south. The sun at length showed itself upon the distant hills, and before it had completely sunk in the west, the sky was as pure and cloudless as in one of the happy days of June. This was hailed with joy by the whole band, both Indians and whites, and preparations were made for an early start on the following morning.

CHAPTER XV.

*Deer Hunt.—Encampment.—Indian Night
Fires.—Lost Horses.—Doctor's Mule.*

ON the third morning after leaving the village, I started out to hunt on foot in company with three Indians: two Otoes, who had borrowed rifles from the soldiers, and a Pawnee. The party, and the train of accompanying delegates, were journeying in a long line, over the prairie, at some miles distance. We had hunted for several hours, up and down the deep ravines, which intersected the prairie. My two companions had become separated from me; but a sturdy Pawnee lingered with me, and trudged lustily along at my heels, with the hope of coming in for a share of any game that I should kill during the day. We

travelled up one ravine, and down another, but nothing was to be found.

“Ugh!” burst from the lips of the Pawnee. I looked round; he was crouching flat to the ground, and made signs to me to get my rifle in readiness. Vague suspicions of danger flashed across my mind; we had heard that there was a band of Sioux Indians lurking round our party. Could we have come unawares upon them? These ideas flashed momentarily upon me, but they as quickly subsided, and cocking my gun, I stole cautiously towards him. He was crouching in some bushes, near the jagged top of a small ridge, which looked down into a deep ravine. As I approached him, he shrank still closer into his hiding place, and made signs to me to pass to the top of the ridge. I crept up slowly, and peered above its level; at the instant, I caught sight of an Indian, as he squatted quickly behind a bush. My fears seemed realized. We had fallen into

the snare! I looked back towards the Pawnee; he was still maintaining his position, and keenly watching my movements. As he caught my eye he urged me by his gestures to fire: I hesitated. At that instant the dark form in front of me, rose slowly up from behind the bush; and I recognised the stern, proud features of one of my Otoe companions. The next moment, I caught sight of a large buck lying lazily beneath the shade of a bush. The mystery was explained in an instant. The Pawnee had seen the animal; and it was the deer, and not the Indian, whom he wished to be shot. As I rose to fire the Otoe again crouched behind the bush; the bullet missed, and the beast leaping up, sprang towards the spot where his foe lay hid. He had scarcely taken three leaps, before a shot whistled from a clump of bushes, at some distance, and in a different quarter. The deer changed his course, and springing forward, made for the op-

posite side of the ravine. He dashed through the bushes, and bounded like lightning up the ragged steep. At that moment the Otoe, who had first secreted himself, had a fair view of him; he must have been about a hundred yards distant, and was dashing furiously up the craggy hill. The Indian fired, and the deer fell on one knee, but regained his feet. In front of him, was a steep bank, covered with shrubbery. He made a desperate effort to gain it, but failed; and rolled headlong down, until he splashed in the brook at the bottom. A loud whoop burst from the three Indians, and the two youngest sprang forward to the spot; while the third, who was a cautious old fellow, stopped to reload his rifle.

When they arrived at the place where the buck had fallen, they found that he was not dead, neither was his wound mortal; one of his fore legs was shivered by the bullet, but he had gained his feet, and

now stood at bay. His head was bent to the ground, and he dashed his antlers furiously in every direction; his eyes flared with a wild, menacing expression; and the white foam slavered from his mouth. The Indians made several attempts to thrust their knives into him, but were as often balked by his fiercely-brandished antlers. They hovered around him like wolves; now threatening him in one quarter; now in another; but his horns ever met them. They then both attacked him at once, and succeeded in inflicting a slight wound. It served only to increase his fury; he leaped towards them, with a ferocity that caused them in turn to take to flight. Just then, the Indian who had remained behind to load his rifle, came up. The buck faced towards him and again brandished his antlers; but a bullet hurled him to the ground, and the next moment a tomahawk was buried between his eyes. A sharp convulsive

shudder passed over his frame, he made a desperate effort to gain his feet, but in vain, a second shudder concluded his mortal struggle, and falling over upon his side, he expired.

An Indian is a quick butcher, and not more than ten minutes had elapsed, before the animal was skinned, and cut up. Each of us took a quarter upon our backs and set off for the encampment; which we reached about an hour after night fall.

The party had encamped in a small isolated grove. It was completely clear of underwood, except here and there a tall bush; and there was not another tree in sight. A spring gushed out at the foot of a hill at a short distance, and flowed in a pure but scanty stream through the grove.

When we came in we found that the Indians had divided into squads, and that every ten or a dozen had kindled their own night fires. All the arrangements, preparatory to remaining quiet, were not

yet completed. The soldiers were felling dead trees, for fuel. Joseph was busily employed, in hobbling and swearing at his mules; while Mordecai with the air of a connoisseur, stood by, assisting him with his advice.

Some of the Pawnees, and Otoes, were scattered through the grove in search of fuel. Some breaking dead limbs from off the trees, and others collecting what was already strewed upon the ground. Two or three were erecting shantees to keep off the dews of the night. And several young Otoes were employed in weaving a shed of boughs, to shelter the wife of the Iotan, who had been unwell for several days past; and whose disease always grew worse towards evening, when she would have been obliged to assist in the labour, if she had been in good health.

In the course of an hour, the Indians completed their arrangements, and kindled a string of fires along the dry bed of

a stream. As I had never seen them when encamped, except upon the Platte, where all vivacity had been soaked out of them. I strolled among the different groups. They were all in high glee. I came to the fire, occupied by the Wild Horse's family and a few of his dependants. The old warrior was in the keen enjoyment of some witticism just uttered by a little shrivelled fellow, a hanger on, who was evidently trying to make himself agreeable ; that he might be invited to partake of a racoon that was cooking over the fire, under the superintendence of the squaw of his host. The Wild Horse made room for me by his side, so I seated myself, nor was I permitted to leave until I had partaken of his viands. From his fire I went to that of the Long Hair, who was huddled up, with his whole soul apparently engaged, in roasting a small piece of venison, upon the point of a green stick. He looked up for a moment, and then turned his attention to the

roasting meat. I soon left him and strolled off to the fire of the Otoes. Here I found the Doctor very cosily seated between the Iotan, and his wife, prescribing for *her*, and taking care of *himself*, by occasionally cutting a rib from a large piece of venison standing in front of the fire, impaled upon a stake of green wood.

Early the next morning the tents were struck, when Mordecai made his appearance with a very lugubrious face, informing us that two horses had disappeared, and that the mule belonging to the Doctor was also missing. The Doctor was in a fever. He ran down to the place where the animals pastured ; he examined the bushes, and beat through all the long grass ; but his mule, Kitty Keero, was not to be found. He then seated himself upon the stump of a tree, and thrusting his hands in his breeches-pockets, shouted the name of his mule at the top of his lungs ; but no Kitty Keero answered him. At last the Inter-

preter pointed to a savage-looking Pawnee, leaning against a tree, with his hair matted and twisted in every direction, and a few long elf locks reaching down to his naked waist. He advised the Commissioner to send him in search of the horses; as he was a first rate fellow to track a hoof. A blanket was accordingly promised the Indian in case of success, and after hovering around the grove for a short time, in search of the hoof mark, he hit upon it, and started off like a hound.

In an hour he returned, bringing with him the vagrant animals. Kitty Keero gave utterance to a long apologetic bray, as she entered the grove. This was well received by her master, who was so much overjoyed at once more seeing her, that two or three reproachful repetitions of her name, were all the chidings she received.

The wagons then drove out of the grove, followed by the Indians; the rear being brought up by the horsemen. In front of

them rode the Doctor mounted upon Kitty; and as they jogged slowly along, I could not help thinking, that they would have formed no inapt illustration of Sancho Panza and his beloved Dapple.

CHAPTER XVI.

Elk Chase.—Wandering from Party.—Herd of Elk.—Night Camp.—Hill of Bones.—Raccoon.—Indian.—Return to Party.—Wild Horse.

ON the morning of the fifth day of our journey, an Otoe Indian, who was on the look-out, came running to us with the intelligence of a large *gang* of elk. All was excitement. The soldiers snatched their yagers; the Otoes their rifles; the Pawnees strung their bows, drew their arrows from their quivers, and all hurried after the Indian guide, over the prairie which had been burnt before us. In ten minutes they reached the top of a hill, looking down into a deep ravine, about three hundred yards distant. It was thronged with elk. Some were gambolling about; some resting amid the high

luxuriant grass, which here had escaped the fire. Others browsing upon the foliage of the vines, which hung in long and graceful festoons from the dwarf bushes; and some were slaking their thirst at a limpid brook. But even in these, their moments of greatest security, their instinctive vigilance was not at rest. For while most of the herd were frolicking, several, who from their enormous size, and the unwieldy length of their antlers, appeared to be the oldest in the gang, had stationed themselves as sentinels, on jutting rocks in the elevated banks, which commanded an extensive view. There they stood on the look-out, their heads high in the air, their nostrils expanded to catch the tainted breeze.

Scarcely had our band paused on the top of the hill, before the eyes of the watchful sentinels were turned upon them, and a loud snort gave the signal for a general flight. The bushes and shrubs, snap-

ped and crashed beneath their rush, as they rolled together in a heavy mass. Their branching antlers tore through the wild vines; and the whole herd dashed across the ravine and thundered up the opposite steep. Large stones and fragments of rock, gave way beneath the tread of the leaders, and fell bounding among the hindmost. Those in front broke off large masses of sandy soil from the edge of the banks, and losing their footing, were whirled back among their companions. Notwithstanding the confusion, however, half a minute had not elapsed, before the whole herd had surmounted the steep, and were flying over the prairie, with the swiftness of a whirlwind.

“No elk meat to-day,” said Rash, (one of the soldiers,) leaning on the end of his yager, and watching the herd as they swept behind a distant skirt of trees.

“Ugh!” ejaculated an Otoe, in answer.

“Ugh!” ejaculated half a dozen Paw-

nees, unstringing their bows, and turning off towards the camp.

“Ugh! nin-gah om-pah,” (no elk) said Hah-che-kah-sug-hah, shouldering his rifle and preparing to continue his journey.

I had been in the habit of hunting in company with this Indian, and when he started forward, instead of returning to the camp with the rest, I followed him. The deer were abundant in this section of the country, and our object was game. We commenced a keen search in the hollows, but for a long time were unsuccessful. At last the guttural “ugh!” from the Indian, informed me that he saw something: and the next moment he pointed out a large buck, reclining in a distant hollow. He immediately made for it, while I seated myself in the grass, to watch his success. After stealing along several hollows, and keeping among the tall grass, he at last came upon the animal and fired. The buck started up, staggered a few paces, then

scoured away over the top of the hill. The Indian, after pausing to reload, followed, and also disappeared. I waited in hopes of hearing the *whoop!* which usually followed a successful shot; but all was silent; so I sauntered slowly along, expecting him to return. Nearly half an hour had elapsed, when I caught sight of him, standing upon the top of a high peak, at several miles' distance. Supposing that he had been led off by game, I no longer delayed for him, but struck forward, selecting a route for myself. I had been in the habit of leaving the party at sunrise, previously ascertaining the direction which they intended to take; then coming upon their trail during the day, by following it I had always reached the camp by night-fall. From never failing in this, I had grown self-confident, and this morning, I had not even inquired their intended course.

I travelled for many hours; following

the hollows, and beating the tall grass, in hopes of starting a deer ; but with the exception of a few grouse, I met with nothing. I had continued thus unsuccessful till afternoon, and was sauntering along a high ridge, looking round to see if I could perceive any trace of the party, when suddenly turning my head, I caught sight of a number of objects, stringing slowly along the top of a ridge. At first I was surprised ; for I mistook them for a train of pack-horses ; but the next moment undeceived me, and I discovered that I had come unaware, upon a herd of elk. There were about a dozen of them. They were as quick-sighted as myself ; for at the very moment that my eye rested upon them, they also detected me. They halted and snuffed the air ; but I was too far off to taint it. So they turned away, and slowly loitered on. I immediately made for a thicket of brushwood, and beneath this shelter, rushed swiftly towards them. I

had not gone far, however, when, upon rounding a small point of bushes, I came directly upon another herd. There must have been more than a hundred in it. Many were lying upon the ground ; some were gamboling and frisking ; two or three were butting each other with their horns ; and several wary old fellows were stationed round as sentinels. I was within a hundred yards of them, so I fired at a full-grown buck. The bullet struck one of his fore legs, and he fell. In an instant the whole herd were on their feet, and huddling together like frightened sheep, they fled over the hills.

I sprang from my hiding place, and drawing my knife, ran towards the wounded animal ; but before I could reach him, he gained his feet, and hobbled off, at a rate which kept me at the full stretch of my speed. I then stopped to reload my rifle, and followed expecting every moment to see him drop. He led me a long

chase, over hill and dale, and across runs of water; until I gave out; and seating myself, saw him hobble out of sight.

It was now time to look out for the party; a thing which I had totally forgotten, in the heat of the chase; nor had I taken any note of the course I was pursuing; so that when my race was ended, I was completely bewildered. I was within a short distance of a well-wooded stream, and I suspected that the party would encamp, somewhere upon its banks. I knew too, that they must be to the westward of me, so I followed the course of the river.

I travelled till sunset, examining every ridge in the prairie; every bend in the thicket; but there was no human being to be seen, nor a trail, or foot print, on the burnt sod, except the hoof marks, where the herd of elk had passed. I then clambered to the top of a high-peaked hill, which overlooked the prairie for miles; but all was deserted. I determined, then

to encamp for the night, in the neighbouring piece of wood, and in the morning to renew my search. At the same time, resolving like most persons who are in trouble, that if I got safely out of this scrape, I would take better care when next I hunted alone. I went down into the woods and built a fire. The night was cold, and bleak. There was no grass to make a bed ; the wolves howled incessantly ; and to judge from their snarling, and yelping at the foot of a tree, a little distance off, I imagined, that they had pursued some animal, which had taken refuge in its branches. The night passed away drearily, and with a joyous feeling, I once more saw the east streaked with the light of dawn.

Before the day had fairly broken, I left the grove, and pursued my course to the westward, until I again came to a ridge in the prairie. This I ascended and looked in every direction ; but could see nothing.

I raised my voice and gave an Indian hunting whoop, which might have been heard for a mile. The woods echoed it; but there was no other answer. I wished to discharge my rifle, in hopes that it might reach the ears of the party; but I had only a single charge of powder, left in my horn; and if I should be obliged to journey to the settlements alone, I thought that this would be too precious to be wasted. So in silence, and with drooping spirits, I continued my journey along the line of timber. The sun rose, and gradually ascended in the heavens. A vague doubt began to steal across my mind; that I had, perhaps, crossed the trail, in the obscurity of the morning twilight; for I was now much farther to the west, than I thought it possible, the party could have gone. About a mile in front of me a long arm of timber jutted out into the prairie. I made for it, determining if I did not then come upon their trail, that I would

retrace my steps and carefully examine that portion which I had crossed before daybreak. I reached the timber; but saw no track. I again whooped; but as before, the echoing forests alone answered me; and with a sensation of utter loneliness, I turned round and retraced my steps. It was near mid-day when I reached my last encamping place. I had carefully noted every mark upon the black sod; I saw my own foot-prints, where I had struck out into the prairie in the morning; but nothing else. I then kept on for an hour longer, but my mind was constantly vacillating—whether to follow my own foot-prints until they guided me to the camping ground where I had left the party on the day previous, or to keep on to the eastward until I should reach the Missouri; or once more to return over the ground which I had just passed.

I remember well the spot where I paused to settle my purpose. It was a high

swell, which commanded a view over miles of prairie, and even overlooked the top of the lofty trees in the thicket. It was strewn with bones. For several hundred yards, the whole hill was literally covered with them. It looked like some deserted charnel; and I recollect even in the midst of my perplexity, taking up one and examining it—wondering whether it belonged to man or beast. The place might have been the scene of a battle; for the bones were so small that they could scarcely be those of animals. There were no skulls, either of man or brutes, to solve the mystery; and even the bones were covered with a greenish mould, from many years' exposure.

After some consideration, I resolved to retrace my steps, and accordingly turned down the hill, and once more proceeded on my journey. I now was growing hungry, and for once felt the miseries of a keen appetite. In the midst of these

cogitations, I caught sight of the head of a racoon, who was reconnoitering me from behind the stump of a tree; I shot him, and skinned him; and kindling a fire, cooked part of him on the spot. The cinders from my fire, caught in a small patch of dry grass, which had escaped the general burning of the prairie; and in a moment it was in a blaze—filling the air with a cloud of black smoke. When I finished my meal, I slung the residue of my prize upon my back, and struck out into the prairie. I had scarcely done so before I caught sight of an Indian, standing upon the top of a ridge at some distance. In a moment after he perceived me, and waved his blanket over his head, to attract my attention. I raised the Otoe hunting-whoop, and his shout, faint, from the distance, answered me. I then started for the hill, and the Indian, seating himself, waited till I came up. He was one of the Otoes who accompanied us. His

Indian name I do not recollect; but when translated it signified, "*the man that drags his heels.*" It was given him on account of a shuffling gait, which it was said that he possessed, but which I could never discover.

We started together, and about a mile beyond the arm of timber where I had turned back in the morning, we came upon the trail of the party.

Night closed in upon us, long before we reached their camping ground. I was nearly exhausted; the light racoon, which I carried upon my back, seemed to grow almost as heavy as a deer. My thirst grew intense; I stopped to drink at every pool; and kept constantly breaking off the tops of the rosin weed, and chewing its pitchy sap to keep my mouth moist. Still the Indian kept on with unwearied steps, sometimes pausing to listen as a cry sounded through the night air, or turning to point out the light of a

prairie on fire at a distance. He did not slacken his pace, until with a deep sigh! he pointed out to me the night-fires of our party, glimmering in a thick grove, on the borders of a brawling stream.

A loud shout, followed by a genuine Indian yell, burst from the lips of the doctor, when he first caught sight of me. This was followed by a hearty shake of the hand, and warm congratulations from the commissioner, and the whole party.

I was afterwards informed, that the Indian who discovered me, had crossed my track on the day previous; and, upon being told that I had not made my appearance, he had been induced by the promise of a blanket to set out in search of me.

I had not been long seated before our fire, when the Wild Horse, dressed in a pair of white corduroy pantaloons, with the rest of his body naked, came stalking up to shake hands with me. His object evidently was to display this new article

of dress; which had been presented to him by the doctor. Although highly delighted, he walked in them, as if in fetters; for though the doctor had a rotundity of abdomen, which completely outmeasured that of the Indian, yet the other far exceeded him in the size and length of his lower extremities; and the garment sat so tight to his legs, that at a little distance he had the appearance of having been white-washed. He kept about us during the whole evening. I imagine, however, that in this short space of time he grew completely tired of his new garb, for the next morning, I saw his son scampering through the bushes, dressed in the same pair of breeches—though they were as much too large for him, as they were too small for his father. He, too, soon wearied of them; and after having once or twice tripped up his own heels in wearing them, he abandoned them to the wife of the Wild Horse, who, I believe, from that period “wore the breeches.”

CHAPTER XVII.

The False Alarm.

THE sun was glowing with a mellow warmth, upon the prairie; when our train, slowly ascended one of the black, undulating swells, which traverse the whole face of the country. At our feet, lay a great prairie, intersected by a waving thread of timber, which extended for many miles, and was now tinted with the bright and variegated hues of autumn.

The Pawnees stood for a moment upon the top, casting their eyes about them. A shriek rang through the air; so wild, and shrill, that it caused even the most stern to start convulsively, and clutch their bows, while the deep guttural “Ugh” burst from every chest, as they turned towards the Indian, who sent up the cry.

He was standing a little in advance of the party; his slender but muscular frame, bent slightly forward; his form resting firmly upon one foot, while the ball of the other alone touched the ground, as if he had been arrested, in the act of stepping forward. His nostrils were expanded; his teeth slightly bared; his eyes intently fixed in the direction indicated by the extended forefinger of his outstretched arm. The eyes of the whole dusky troop were instantly turned in that direction. They gazed for an instant, and then the prairie sounded with their shrill, appalling yells.

At the foot of the hills, at the distance of about five hundred yards, a small band of Indians were emerging from a wood; their white blankets and glittering gun-barrels, contrasting strongly with the dusky forms, and savage weapons, of our Pawnee companions. For a short space, there was silence, and then arose the second wild shout of the Pawnees, while the

hated name of “Konza! Konza! Konza!” burst in a howl from every lip.

The little band in the glen, sent up an answering shout, which though it sounded less loudly, on account of the smallness of their numbers, and the distance which intervened, was still replete with defiance. As they raised their yell, they snatched their rifles from their shoulders, and prepared for the encounter.

Just then a loud whoop was heard, and Wild Horse came rushing up the hill-side which we had just ascended. His long hair streamed in the wind. In his hand, he grasped his bow, and about a dozen arrows. He had heard the answering cry of the Konza, and had snuffed a fight in the wind, with the keen relish of a veteran warrior. His small black eye glittered with joy, as he looked down upon the handful, who had dared to send up a note of defiance. He uttered a wild, exulting laugh, and shaking his war-club with a

fierce motion, towards the distant foes, he raised a war-whoop, and waved his men onward.

And now the loud voice of the Iotan chief rose amid the din, calling away his band of Otoes, and summoning them to the top of a neighbouring hill. He was at peace with the Konzas, and had nothing to do in the present strife; it was all the same to him which gained the day; so he coolly drew off his men, and waited to see the result. On an eminence at a short distance, stood the Apollo-like form, and snarling, tiger face of the Long Hair. His robe was thrown over his left arm, while his right, grasping his bow, waved his warriors fiercely forward.

For a very short space, the cloud of Indians hung upon the hill, and then, with one wild cry they swept down upon the devoted band. There was no order of battle; each rushed forward goaded by his own impulses. They raised no farther shout;

every feeling seemed now absorbed in the deep, burning thirst for blood. Their adversaries displayed equal alacrity. A loud, fierce shout had answered the war-cry of the Pawnees ; then all was silent ; they leaped forward, prepared to give cold lead in answer to the feathered shafts of their ruder foes. As they advanced they separated, and extended their front, to prevent their being outflanked. They had now reached within about two hundred yards of each other, when a hesitation was visible in the Pawnee band. They moved slower and slower. One or two stopped, and gazed steadily at their approaching enemies : then they collected in groups, and seemed to consult. Even the Wild Horse, a savage who had revelled in blood from his infancy, dropped his uplifted war-club, and pausing, leaned upon his bow. The Long Hair drew up his haughty form, and, swinging upon his back his quiver, which had before hung

in front, folded his arms, and appeared to wait passively for the approach of the opposite band.

A grim smile of scorn had curled the lip of the old Iotan chief, when he first beheld the hesitation in the Pawnee ranks. For, like the chiefs of most of the neighbouring tribes, though he feared the immense hordes which belonged to that nation, yet he most heartily despised every individual of the four villages. There was an apparent acknowledgment of inferiority in this numerous band, thus hesitating to attack the handful, who challenged them to the conflict, which pleased the veteran chief; for in war, his own nation and the Konza, had always been looked upon as equals.

In a moment, however, a like hesitation was observed in the ranks of the foe. They drew up and shouldered their rifles, and then moved frankly forward to meet the Pawnee warriors.

The old chief was perplexed. He held his hand anxiously over his eyes, to penetrate the mystery. Suddenly a new light seemed to flash over his countenance. Waving his hand in the air, he shouted the name of his own tribe, and rushed down the hill, followed by his band. It was a party of Otoes, instead of Konzas, and the recognition which had fortunately taken place, had prevented the effusion of blood, which otherwise would have followed.

The parties now drew off, keeping coldly aloof, and eyeing each other with those proud and haughty glances, which are apt to pass between rival people even when friendly.

The Iotan conversed a short time with a tall, thin Indian, who appeared to have command of the hunting party, and, after leaving with him, a worn-out horse which he had brought from the Pawnee village, resumed his journey, in which he was fol-

lowed by the whites, and the long train of disappointed Pawnees.

For a short time, the Otoes watched the movements of the party, then turning off, they crossed the prairie, and disappeared in a piece of forest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Elk Chase.—Indian Sagacity.—Indian Camp.

ON the following day we were traversing a valley between two black prairie hills, when the crack of a rifle sounded from a distant hollow, and was followed by a loud shout. The Indians stopped short, and listened, but the shout was not repeated. At length a young Pawnee, impatient, sprang upon a horse and galloped over a hill, beyond which the shout had arisen. As he disappeared over its top, a second shout was heard. After the lapse of a few moments a loud whoop rose from the same quarter, and suddenly a powerful buck elk, with branching antlers, and enormous tines, dashed with mad leaps to the summit of the hill. He stopped short at the sight of our band and

glared wildly around. He was wounded in the shoulder, and the Pawnee was in hot pursuit. Casting a quick glance round at his foe, and throwing back his head, he bounded along the ridge. The wound in his shoulder, lessened his speed. The Pawnee plied his lash. The heavy hoofs of his horse, struck with a jarring sound upon the burnt prairie; and a whirl of black ashes was raised in a light cloud around him. His long hair streamed in the air, and his dark, heavy robe, fluttered from his shoulders, as he dashed forward. A great interest in the result was evinced. The Pawnees were anxious that their hunter should acquit himself well, in the presence of a foreign tribe, who watched his movements with a jealous eye. The Otoes lost their usual cold character, in the earnest interest, excited by the headlong chase; and the Indian hunter who had wounded the elk, stood upon the top of the hill, leaning upon the muzzle

of his rifle, and watching the success of his ally.

The elk reached the end of the ridge, and sprang down its sloping declivity. The Pawnee horseman followed. In a moment after the elk was seen bounding up an opposite ridge, and leaping along its verge. His pursuer pressed on, about fifty yards in the rear. Here the chase was again in full sight, and continued so for a few moments. The elk was growing weaker and weaker. He came to the end of a ridge which was cragged and almost perpendicular. He paused for a moment on the brink; looked down the steep; cast a glance behind; then gathering his feet he made a desperate bound down the rugged bank, and in a moment's time dashed up to the top of a succeeding ridge. Almost at the same time, the Pawnee was at the end of the hill; he looked for a moment down the steep—he half urged forward his foaming horse, then reining him

in, turned away, and commenced his return towards the party. As he was leaving the summit of the eminence, he looked around for the animal which had escaped him, but he had disappeared in a clump of shrubbery. Seeing the pursuit was ended, the Pawnees folded their robes around them, the Otoes shouldered their guns, and the whole party resumed its journey.

In company with *Hah-che-kah-sug-hah* I soon after left the party and commenced a hunt over the prairie. We were overtaken by a young Otoe called "the Buffalo Chief." He was armed with a rifle; and was a keen and generally a successful hunter. Several Pawnees also came loitering up, for they always hang in the wake of the hunters, in hopes of obtaining a portion of what is killed.

We directed our course towards a lofty skirt of forest, fringed with brushwood. Here we thought that we might hunt suc-

cessfully ; but the night closed in, and still we were empty handed. So we were obliged to set out in search of the spot, which we supposed would be the site of our night encampment. The Indians moved forward with a swift, unwearied step. They seemed to glide along. Their blankets fluttered in the slight current produced by the rapidity of their motions, and I was obliged to hurry swiftly on, lest I should lose sight of them. An hour passed ; they still pushed forward ; they spoke not a word ; not a sign of intelligence passed between them ; they moved on rapidly through the dark, as if they guided their course by instinct.

“Ugh!” ejaculated Hah-che-kah-sughah, stopping short, and looking earnestly at some object upon the black sod.

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!” burst from the chests of several of the Pawnees, as they gathered round the suspicious object, and bent down, to examine it more closely. I

came up to them, but could see nothing. The Indian pointed to the ground, and after much difficulty, I descried the faint impression of a moccassin upon the ashes of the burnt grass, though it would have escaped any, save the keen and ever-observing eye of an Indian.

A few words passed between two of the Otoes; then turning off they followed steadily upon the unknown track. They appeared to trace it without difficulty, though to me it was totally invisible.

In about ten minutes, there was another burst from the Indians, and a broad gray line, traced across the black prairie, and visible even in the darkness, announced that we had at length come upon the trail of our party. Here the Indians turned off in the direction indicated by the line, and passing down a deep hollow, we ascended a hill. From its summit we perceived at a short distance, a dusky uncertain outline of timber, in a hollow; and the blazes of

fires glimmering, and flickering among the trees, assured us that we had at last reached the resting place of the party. The camp lay nestled in a large grove of trees. Within a few yards of it, the Nemahaw river brawled over a stony bottom, with wild, and not unpleasing murmurings.

The Indians had distributed themselves about the open woodland, in groups of five or six. Each group had its own night-fire, and a rough shed of boughs, to protect it from the dew. In the centre of the grove, and strongly reflecting the light of the fire, stood the canvas tents of the whites, and reposing before a pile of blazing logs, were the uncouth forms of the soldiers; their appearance at present being little less wild, than that of the Indians. At one end of the heavy logs, was stretched the demi-savage, half-breed interpreter, reposing after the labours of the day, and gazing sleepily upon the fire,

which blazed high amid the gathered timber. One or two Otoes were mingled with the whites ; but the rest of the trusty band with the old Iotan, as master of ceremonies, were collected round a large fire, which burnt brightly at a few yards' distance. The graceful form of the Iotan's wife, was reclining upon a pile of dried grass, beneath a canopy of green boughs, which had been formed for her, by the young men of the Otoe party. Notwithstanding the assurances of the doctor, that she was recovering, she persisted in her resolution of remaining an invalid ; for as long as she travelled in this character, the soft heart of the soldier who drove the wagon, prevented his refusing her a seat in the vehicle ; and the fiery-tempered old Iotan still insisted, that the young Indians should perform her share of the drudgery.

There was something wildly noble, about this little band of Otoes. They

were adorned with all the coxcombrty of Indians, before they have degenerated from savage men, to civilized beasts. There was a frank, gallant bearing about them ; a native chivalry, which caused us almost unconsciously to place more confidence in them, than in their fierce, untamed associates. Behind them, resting against the trees, were their borrowed rifles, glittering beneath the blaze of the fire. Around us in every direction, were the rough wicker sheds of the Pawnees, their fires gleaming with an uncertain, lurid light, among the tall, straight trunks of the overhanging grove.

The Indians in their shaggy robes, were flitting to and fro like troubled spirits ; now hid in the gloom of the night, and now their dark eyes glittering, and their painted faces glaring, as they moved in the light of some blazing pile. Some had wrapped their robes closely round them, and sat buried in a gloomy reverie, with

their scowling eyes fixed upon the burning logs, taking no part in the conversation of their comrades, nor any note of what was going on around them.

At length one of the young warriors struck up a wild song, which made the woods re-echo. Another joined it, and another, until the whole of the group round that fire, were engrossed in the theme. A single voice from a distant pile then struck in, another followed. Another fire then added its voice, and gradually it spread from one group to another, until every throat in the whole Pawnee troop, had united in it. It sung of war, and well did the gestures, and wildly energetic tones of the singers, express the meaning of the words. In parts, the blended voices swelled on the night air, with a mournfully melodious sound; but when the howl, with which they ended every verse, burst from the throats of the whole band, it was thrilling and fearful. The

Otoes caught the wild enthusiasm of the moment, and they too added their voices to the savage concert, until it almost seemed to rend the black canopy above us.

The song was kept up till after midnight; for long after we had retired to our tents, it frequently awoke us from our slumbers, or mingled in the phantasmagoria of our dreams.

CHAPTER XIX.

*Separation from Party.—Burning Prairie.—
Wolves.—Journey.*

It was scarcely sunrise, before the dark grove echoed with preparations for our departure. The voice of our mongrel French boy, Joe, was heard, hailing the mules, which had strayed for pasturage, some distance down the bottom. The soldiers loaded the pack-horses; the Pawnees collected together their scanty stock of cooking utensils, and packed them upon the back of a lean, bony nag, whose evil destiny had made him drudge-horse to the Indian host; and the old Iotan saw his wife snugly tucked away in one of the dear-born wagons, and stationed himself as guide, at the border of the forest, waiting for the movements of the band.

It was a cold, blustering day, with a

clear and cloudless sky. The wind swept in sudden gusts through the creaking trees, and the dead prairie grass waved and rustled as the gale brushed over it.

In a short time the party wound out of the grove, and struck across the prairie, in the direction taken by the Iotan. He had been a bold marauder in his youth, and had traversed every woody nook, and every prairie swell which lay in this quarter. When standing upon some high bluff, he would call his young warriors round him, and point out the different scenes of his exploits. "There," said he, pointing to some clustering forest, "there have I scalped the Osages, and there," pointing in another direction, "have I stolen horses from the same nation. There is not a grove which has not echoed the screams of my enemies, or borne witness to my plunderings. There is not a bottom in which I have not encamped, nor a swell which I have not crossed, either in hunt-

ing, or when bound upon some war expedition." He loved in his old age to dwell upon the deeds of his youth, and when narrating them, his faded features would light up, and his eye would flash, "for then," said he, "my arm was heavy and my limbs were strong." Yet it seemed to me they could not have been much heavier, or stronger, unless they had been iron itself. Such was the Indian who acted as guide, and led the way in front of our party; nor could I see that age had impaired his vigour; for in traversing hills and ravines, forests and streams, I never knew his step to flag or falter, or his frame to show any symptoms of fatigue.

After following him for a short time, I turned off, in company with a strapping soldier named McClanahan, to search for wild turkeys, which are abundant in the forests skirting the Nemahaw. We traversed several glades, opening in a thick growth of timber; but although we saw

many, we were for a long time unable to get a shot at them.

In beating up the forest we separated, and I soon lost sight of my companion; though for nearly an hour I occasionally heard the report of his rifle, sometimes near, and sometimes far off. Gradually each discharge appeared to be more distant, and at length they ceased altogether. I kept on after the turkeys without killing any. Sometimes I succeeded in *winging* one, and then followed a hot scrambling chase through bushes, briars, and underwood, which invariably terminated in the escape of the bird.

Several hours had passed in this way. I had strayed many miles through the bottom, when the height of the sun warned me that it was near mid-day, and time to think of rejoining my companions.

Leaving the woods I took to the prairie, and sought the trail of the party, and for several hours pursued my course, examin-

ing every hill and hollow, in hopes of finding it; but no trail could I see. As the day waned, I increased my speed; but still without success. The prairie was deserted. The long grass waved before the blast but not a living thing met my eye. I then feared that I might have crossed the trace without noticing it; but the more I thought of it, the more impossible did it seem, that the heavy track of so numerous a body of men, should have escaped my eye. I ascended a ridge which commanded a wide prospect. A wilderness of grass was before me, with small rolling hills extending in every direction; but there was no appearance of my companions; nothing to be seen, but the sky and the prairie. It was time to seek a resting place for the night. I looked round for some tree, but not one was in sight. Dead grass, wild weeds, and withered stalks, were the only covering of the hills. I was like a mariner alone in the

midst of an ocean. I knew not which way to turn. If I travelled to the west I might be approaching my companions, or I might be going from them; and then too, I would be journeying away from the settlements. So I at length determined to take an easterly course, until I reached the Missouri, which I intended should be my guide to the abodes of the whites.

With a quick pace I pressed forward, anxious to find a sheltering place for the night. It was the end of October; the wind was chilling, and I was clad in a dress of drilling, such as is used only for summer wear. Just as the sun was sinking, I caught sight of a line of forest, at many miles' distance. This acted like a spur upon a jaded horse. With fresh spirits I bounded down the sides of the prairie swells, and forced my way through the tall, clogging grass. But at last the sun set, and as the twilight darkened, objects grew indistinct, and the forest which

could not have been more than two miles off, was gradually lost in the obscurity. In front of me was a large hill ; I ascended it, to wait on its summit until the moon rose ; for I feared to lose my course in the darkness.

A feeling of very desolation came over me, as I sat there, with nothing but the dreary waste around me, and the blue, cold sky twinkling with stars, above. The wind had increased to a gale, and swept howling along, occasionally bearing with it the yell of some prowling wolf. For hours I sat shivering, with my eyes fixed upon the eastern horizon, watching eagerly for the moon ; and never had I greeted her appearance, with such heartfelt pleasure, as when she emerged to view.

I resumed my journey, and after toiling for an hour, through a wide bottom of tall weeds and matted grass, I reached the grove—erected a small shed of boughs after the manner of the Indians, and

lying down was soon asleep, before a huge fire, which I built against the trunk of a fallen tree.

I was awakened by the increasing violence of the gale. At times it sank into low wailings, and then would swell again, howling and whistling through the trees. After sitting by the fire for a short time, I again threw myself upon my pallet of dried grass, but could not sleep. There was something dismal and thrilling in the sound of the wind. At times, wild voices seemed shrieking through the woodland. It was in vain that I closed my eyes; a kind of superstitious feeling came over me, and though I saw nothing, my ears drank in every sound. I gazed around in every direction, and sat with my hand on my gun-trigger, for my feelings were so wrought up, that I momentarily expected to see an armed Indian start from behind each bush. At last I rose up, and sat by the fire. Suddenly, a swift gust swept

through the grove, and whirled off sparks and cinders in every direction. In an instant, fifty little fires, shot their forked tongues in the air, and seemed to flicker with a momentary struggle for existence. There was scarcely time to note their birth, before they were creeping up in a tall, tapering blaze and leaping lightly along the tops of the scattering clumps of dry grass. In another moment they leaped forward into the prairie, and a waving line of brilliant flame, quivered high up in the dark atmosphere.

Another gust came rushing along the ravine. It was announced by a distant moan; as it came nearer a cloud of dry leaves filled the air; the slender shrubs and saplings bent like weeds—dry branches snapped and crackled. The lofty forest trees writhed, and creaked, and groaned. The next instant the furious blast reached the flaming prairie. Myriads and myriads of bright embers were flung wildly

up in the air: flakes of blazing grass, whirled like meteors through the sky. The flame spread into a vast sheet, that swept over the prairie, bending forward, illumining the black waste which it had passed, and shedding a red light far down the deep vistas of the forest; though all beyond the blaze was of a pitchy blackness. The roaring flames, drowned even the howling of the wind. At each succeeding blast, they threw long pyramidal streams upwards in the black sky, then flared horizontally, and seemed to bound forward, lighting at each bound, a new conflagration. Leap succeeded leap; the flames rushed onward with a race-horse speed. The noise sounded like the roar of a stormy ocean, and the wild, tumultuous billows of flame, were tossed about like a sea of fire. Directly in their course, and some distance out in the prairie, stood a large grove of oaks—the dry leaves still clinging to the branches. There was a

red glare thrown upon them, from the blazing flood. A moment passed, and a black smoke oozed from the nearest tree—the blaze roared among their branches, and shot up for a hundred feet in the air—waving as if in triumph. The effect was transient. In a moment had the fire swept through a grove covering several acres. It sank again into the prairie, leaving the limbs of every tree scathed and scorched to an inky blackness; and shining with a bright crimson light, between their branches. In this way the light conflagration swept over the landscape: every hill seemed to burn its own funeral pyre, and the scorching heat licked up every blade in the hollows. A dark cloud of gray smoke, filled with burning embers, spread over the course of the flames, occasionally forming not ungraceful columns, which were almost instantly shattered by the wind, and driven in a thousand different directions.

For several hours the blaze continued to rage, and the whole horizon became girdled with a belt of living fire. As the circle extended, the flames appeared smaller and smaller: until they looked like a slight golden thread drawn around the hills. They then must have been nearly ten miles distant. At length the blaze disappeared, although the purple light, that for hours illumined the night sky, told that the element was extending into other regions of the prairies.

It was sunrise when I rose from my resting place and resumed my journey. What a change! All was waste. The sun had set upon a prairie still clothed in its natural garb of herbage. It rose upon a scene of desolation. Not a single weed—not a blade of grass, was left. The tall grove, which at sunset was covered with withered foliage, now spread a labyrinth of scorched and naked branches—the very type of ruin. A thin covering of gray

ashes was sprinkled upon the ground beneath, and several large, dead trees, whose dried branches had caught and nourished the flame, were still blazing or sending up long spires of smoke. In every direction, barrenness marked the track of the flames. It had even worked its course against the blast, hugging to the roots of the tall grass.

The wind was still raging; cinders and ashes were drifting, and whirling about, in almost suffocating clouds, sometimes rendering it impossible to see for more than one or two hundred yards.

In surveying the dreary landscape, I caught sight of a gaunt, gray prairie wolf, stealing with a thief-like step down one of the hollows, as if his spirit was cowed by the scene. He was the only living thing to be seen. He saw his fellow-wanderer, but he did not fly. The very desolation around, appeared to have brought him a link nearer to man, for he had lost his terrors of him. He paused as he reached

the foot of the hill. Here he uttered a low, querulous howl, which was answered from the woods, and three others emerged from the timber, and joined him.

They stood for a few moments gazing at me, and then commenced slowly to approach. I knew that there was not a more cowardly beast upon the prairie, than the wolf; but a chill shot over me, as I saw them advance. It seemed as if they regarded me, as the cause of the desolation, that had swept over their homes; and I felt guilty and lonely.

But even amid this want of companionship, I had no relish for that of wolves: so I raised my rifle, and sent a bullet among them. A loud howl answered its report; and the limping step of one of them, as the gang fled for the woods, convinced me, that my messenger had performed its errand.

I now gave up the hopeless task of searching for my fellow travellers; and as

the Iotan had mentioned, that they were but a few days' journey from the settlements, I shouldered my rifle, and taking an easterly course, by aid of the sun, started forward, trusting to make my way to the abodes of white men. It was weary wandering. Hill succeeded hill, and one valley swept off into another. The faint tracery of distant trees, disappeared as I journeyed onward, and soon there was nothing to be seen but the cold, unspecked blue of the sky, and the boundless black of the ravaged prairie.

CHAPTER XX.

A Hunted Deer.—Deserted Encampment.—Distant Indians.—Night Camp.—Owls.—Burning Sycamore.

FOR hours I continued my course, pausing upon the summit of every hill, in a faint, but vain hope of seeing my comrades. At last, at a distance, I saw a deer scouring over the top of a ridge, and making directly towards me. I crouched upon the burnt sod, cocked my rifle, and waited for him. I wondered at his speed, for there was no hunter in sight; but it was soon explained. As he descended into a hollow, three wolves came following at full speed, over the hill. The deer soon rose out of the bend, and kept on towards me. Almost without breathing, I watched him. I had eaten nothing since the morning of the preceding day, and

there was something of ferocity in my feelings, as I gazed at him. I gathered my feet under me, and slowly raised my rifle. The animal still approached. I should have waited ; but a burning feverishness rendered me impatient, and while he was at least a hundred and fifty yards distant, I rose and took aim. He stopped short, and gazed steadily at me, with his head raised high in the air, and presenting only his front. I pulled the trigger ; the bullet might have grazed him, but did him no injury. He did not wait for a second shot, but darted like an arrow across the prairie. I watched him until he faded from my sight, and then re-loaded my rifle.

This incident, which for an instant had diverted the current of my thoughts, now served only to render them more heavy. At the sound of my rifle, the wolves in pursuit, had scampered off as hastily in one direction, as the deer had done in the

other; and I felt a kind of selfish satisfaction in knowing, that if I had not been able to obtain a meal from his ribs, this gang of vagabonds was equally disappointed.

Once more I proceeded on my journey, directing my course by the sun. I had hunted much on foot, and my limbs had become hardened by toil; so that I could journey long without sinking, though not without feeling fatigue. It was about an hour after mid-day when I again came in sight of a forest. There was a golden mark upon the prairie. The blackness stopped abruptly, and pointed out the spot where the fire, from some cause or other, had ceased its course in this direction. A lowering column of smoke, however, hanging like a sullen pall, in another quarter, showed that the element was still at work.

Within half an hour, I reached the wood, and striking an Indian trail, entered it. It was a grove of tall, and beau-

tiful hickories ; and in the centre were the remains of an Indian hunting-camp. It had been occupied for some time, as the frames of the wigwams were more strong and durable in their structure, than those usually erected for transient purposes. They could have been abandoned but lately ; for the bark was still green on the boughs composing them, and there were the recent foot-prints of horses. The dead pea-vines were trampled down by hoofs : and there was one rock, jutting out in the small stream meandering through the grove, which was covered with racoon fur, and here and there sprinkled with drops of blood. I sat down upon the rock, watched the waters, and thought of the former occupants of the grove. Had I been a day sooner, I might have met them ; but then they might have been enemies. So I began to think that things were better as they were ; for even the most friendly tribes, are apt to lose their good will to-

wards the whites, when a single one falls into their power. Desolate as I was, I could not but be sensible of the beauty of the grove. I could see far down deep vistas, gilded here and there by the sunbeams. The wind had gradually died away. The stream glided murmuring over a rocky bottom, and here and there glittered like silver in the beams of the sun. The wild cry of the blue-jay was heard, hailing some noisy comrade in a distant tree-top. As I sat looking upon the water, I heard a slight noise in the stream, above me, and caught sight of a number of wood-ducks, borne on by the current. They are a beautiful bird. Now they glided beneath the shade of some plant that drooped over the water's edge; now they whirled easily round, as some changeful current caught them in its lilliputian whirlpool. They chased each other sportively across the water, sometimes scouring up the stream, then again relinquishing themselves to its

course. They were small game, but I was famished, and had my rifle in readiness. I waited until I got two of them in a range, and then fired. My bullet struck off the head of the first, and considerably confused the ideas of the second ; but after splashing about, bottom upwards, and trying several other novel modes of navigation, he recovered himself, and flew after his companions.

Having secured my prize, I crossed the brook, and struck into a winding pathway, which led up the steep bank opposite.

I had scarcely left the grove, when upon looking round, I caught sight of a train of figures moving along the top of a ridge, far away to the westward. There were six in it, and they must have been many miles distant. So faint was their outline, and so small did they appear in the vast space that lay open in that direction, that they reminded me of the dim, spectre-like forms of a phantasmagoria. At first I felt a start

of joy, for I thought that they might be my companions: but a second reflection convinced me that I was mistaken, for the train was moving along to the northwest—the very reverse of the route to the settlements. Then too the idea flashed across me, that they must be Indians—perhaps hostile ones. Although so distant that there was scarcely a probability of their seeing me, I returned to the grove, where I watched their gliding forms, until they at last sunk behind one of the ridges, and then I pursued my course. In front of me again, was a prairie which had escaped the flame, and was covered with herbage. But though it was pleasing to the eye, I soon began to wish for the black waste; for the tangled grass impeded my steps, and rendered my journey extremely toilsome. I had not accomplished many miles before the sun began to sink in the west. I then determined to travel no farther that night, but take up my quarters in a small

clump of trees, which clustered like an island upon the borders of a brook. I collected a pile of dry wood; kindled a fire; made a spit of a green twig, on which I impaled my duck, and stuck it upright in the ground in front of the fire; then stretching myself upon a bed of dry grass, I watched the roasting of my supper with a hungry eye. When I had made a meal with the relish of a half-famished man, I turned upon my bed and fell asleep. After a time I awoke; added fresh fuel to the fire, and stretched myself upon my pallet, again to sleep.

It was a bright and beautiful night; the moon was shining amidst myriads of stars, veiled now and then by a light, fleecy cloud, from which she seemed to emerge with increased splendour. I lay gazing at her as she moved along like a queen surrounded by her maids of honour.

“Whoop! whoop! whoo!” sounded a loud voice near me.

I started to my feet: for I thought that I had heard a human cry; perhaps one of my party, and with a loud hail I answered the sound.

“Whoop! whoo! whoo!” again repeated the voice. A gigantic sycamore reared its naked and scathed trunk in the moonlight. At the extremity of a single dry limb, which stretched out from nearly the top of the tree, was seated an owl of the largest species.

He repeated the cry which had started me. “Whoop! whoo! whoo!”

“Whoop! whoo! whoo!” responded another from a different quarter, and a dusky bird flitted by, and perched on the long limb beside his companion. I again stretched myself upon my couch and watched them, as they sat between me and the moon. There was a confused jabbering carried on between them: they probably had charge of the grove, and

were puzzled, at the intrusion of a stranger. After debating for some time, they concluded to take a nearer view of the intruder, and descended to a lower branch. Here they carried on the debate; apparently wondering who I was, and what I wanted. They rubbed their huge heads together with an air of vast perplexity: they rocked and fluttered on their perch. Occasionally one of them threw his head on one side, and cast a very inquisitive look down upon me; and then a fresh jabbering went on. After about fifteen minutes spent in this way, the two dignitaries giving a farewell "whoop! whoop! whoop!" flapped off and disappeared.

Again I turned and fixed my gaze upon the moon. There was a feeling of fellowship connected with it. I knew that other eyes were resting upon her pale orb, and I knew that while she was shining upon my solitary couch, she was at the same

time pouring her mellow light, upon the abodes of my friends, far away and unconscious of my situation.

Chilled by the night air, I turned away and looked into the fire—forming palaces, groves, and arcades, amid its glowing embers, until gradually my eyes closed, and I slept.

When I awoke the sun was shining, and I resumed my solitary journey. I continued on foot from sunrise till sunset, without seeing a living thing, unless, perhaps, a distant deer; and halted for the night, in a forest of thick timber. I found a large, dead sycamore standing upright, with a complete chamber formed in its trunk by decay. I kindled a fire in front of it, and filled the empty trunk with dried grass, and pea-vines for a couch. I was wearied and slept soundly, until near midnight, when I was awakened by the intense heat. The fire had by some means communicated to a pile of fuel, which I had

collected to sustain it during the night. This was in a furious blaze, causing the old tree to smoke with the heat. The hollow trunk was no place for me, unless I chose to be roasted. I pulled my cap from my head, and wrapped it round my powder-horn—seized my rifle, and sprang through the fire. The next instant, the flame leaped upon my bed of dried vines, and the whole interior of the dead tree, was in a blaze, that lasted for an instant and then expired. As it was no longer possible to return to it, I seated myself upon a stump, and remained half shivering, half dozing, until morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

*Wild Turkey.—Squirrel.—Parroquets.—Trail.
—Konza Indian.—Night Camp.—Deserted
House.—Konza Agency.—Reaching Leaven-
worth.*

BEFORE the sun had risen, I was on my way, directing my course by the purple streak in the east, which announced his approach. This was the morning of the fourth day since I had parted from my companions. I had made but one meal, and the cravings of hunger were becoming excessive. I looked round, when I reached the edge of the prairie, but saw nothing; I looked through the bottom of forest, but no game was visible. I stretched out my leg, looked at the leather legging which covered it, and considered whether it was easy of digestion. I felt it; it *was* rather tough; so I determined

to keep on, and wait till night, before I proceeded to extremities.

Just then, I caught sight of a turkey, leading a troop to take an airing in the prairie. I whizzed a bullet after him; his wing dropped and dragged, and I commenced a hot pursuit. But though I had injured his wing, I had not damaged his legs, and after following him for nearly fifteen minutes, I threw myself down completely exhausted. The rest of the *gang*, taking advantage of the diversion created in their favour, had disappeared among the trees. I gave up all hopes of again finding them, and wandered slowly along the edge of the woods. As I was winding my way through the trees, I heard a loud *click* above me, and observed a large red squirrel springing from one limb to another, of a bur-oak. As he caught sight of me, he darted round the trunk and peered out, with about an inch of his head, to take an observation. I was

hungry, and this cowardly manœuvre made me angry. I determined, that *have* that squirrel I *would*, if I spent the whole day in shooting at him. I rested my rifle against the trunk of a tree, and after a long aim, fired; the bullet dashed the head of the little animal to pieces, and whirled him some twenty feet off in the air.

I had lost my knife on the day previous, but with the assistance of a nail which I found in my pouch, I skinned my prize, and impaling him upon the point of a spit made of a dry stick, stuck it in the ground before the fire to roast. While the process of cooking was going forward, a flock of screaming parroquets came whirling through the trees; but upon catching sight of me, they determined to stop and see what I was about. They accordingly alighted upon a dead tree directly above me, casting side-looks down upon my roast, and from the joyous chattering that they kept up, no doubt were congratulating

each other, upon having called, just in time to be invited to breakfast. But I had a meal in store for them, of a very different description ; for after hovering round under the tree, for some time, I contrived to get three of them in a range, and fired. My bullet missed, and the flock whirled off, though I could hear their voices raised in a clamorous outcry, at my want of civility, long after they had disappeared among the trees.

I despatched my breakfast with a ravenous appetite, and taking with me the skin of the animal, to serve as a future meal in case of extremity, I continued my course until it was afternoon. However, I was now becoming perplexed. I thought to have reached the settlements before this. Still I saw no signs of human habitation, and I began to yield to the idea, which, strange as it may seem, invariably fastens itself upon persons, when wandering, bewildered through these regions. I thought

that the sun had got turned and was setting in the east. For some time this idea was strong ; but I remembered the almost parting words of an old hunter, who accompanied our party. “Look ye,” said he, “you straggle so much from the party, that some day or other you will not be able to find it again. Then, all you have to do, is to keep straight away for the east. It will be sure to bring you right in the end. But remember one thing—never get bothered. When the sun rises, strike to the east, and don’t *do*, as many have done when puzzled ; don’t think that the sun rises or sets wrong: for if you do, you will go to the d——l.” I was becoming bewildered, and I remembered this advice, just at the time when it was most needful. So I turned my back towards what I had been positive was the east, and travelled in the direction, which I was equally positive was the west.

I had continued along the prairie for

some hours, when suddenly I struck into a wide trail. There were four paths running along side by side, all evidently much travelled, and bearing prints of recent hoofs. While I was examining them narrowly, I caught the trace of a wagon wheel. New strength seemed to course through my limbs at this discovery, and I bounded along the path, as swiftly as if I had just started, upon a fresh and joyous journey. I continued in the trail for several hours. On my right, was a tall, dense bottom of timber; and here and there, through the branches, I could perceive the waters of a mighty river. I instantly supposed this to be the Missouri; that I had struck the trail which led to Leavenworth, and that by continuing in this direction, I would be able to reach it before nightfall. I walked swiftly forward for some time; but still I could see nothing that I recognized. If it was the road to Leavenworth I had passed it be-

fore, and ought to recall the landmarks: but here all was new. As I was looking around I caught sight of a black speck moving over the distant path, which I had already passed. It came nearer and nearer. I could discern that it was a horseman. It might be one of the officers from the garrison, and I slackened my pace for him to come up; but as he came nearer I discovered that he was an Indian. I was then certain that I must be on the banks of the Konzas; that I had struck too far to the south, and had reached it before its junction with the Missouri. I had been longing feverishly for the sight of a human being; yet no sooner did I behold one, than my first movement was to await his approach, with my finger upon my trigger. When he drew near, he held up the palm of his hand, in token of friendship, and galloped directly up to me. He was a fine-looking man of the Konza tribe, apparently not above thirty—wrapped in a blue

blanket, armed with a rifle, and mounted upon a black pony. He alighted; struck fire, and lit his pipe, for a smoke. From that moment we were friends. I learned from him, that the river near, was the Konzas, and that it would be daylight before I could reach the nearest abode of a white man. As soon as our truce was settled, my Indian friend mounted, and left me to follow on foot as well as I was able. I was wearied and hungry, and this want of civility did not increase the mildness of my disposition. I trudged after him; while he occasionally thumped his little nag into a trot, casting a look behind, to see whether I could contrive to keep up with him. This vexed me, and I began to cast around, for the means of paying the fellow for his ill breeding. He at last checked his horse—reached out his rifle with the lock broken, and wished me to mend it. He then handed me a horn, without a grain of powder in it, and wish-

ed me to fill it. I took the gun, and blew into the muzzle; the air passed freely through the touch-hole. "Ha!" thought I, "it is not charged; so Mr. Indian I have you on the hip." I quietly reached it to him, and he, seeing that I was not disposed to put it in order, took it and said nothing more about the matter.

We proceeded in silence until we reached the edge of a narrow stream, about two feet in depth, which ran across the route. Here the Indian paused, by which means I came up with him, and signified my wish to mount his horse to cross the water. He demurred at first, but I persisted; I had a loaded rifle; his was empty: so I gave myself airs, and "spoke as one having authority." At last, though with evident reluctance, he acceded to my request, and in another moment I was behind him on the horse, and upon the opposite side of the brook. I had been mounted only for a few moments; but I found the transition

far from disagreeable. I was wearied with walking, and there was something highly pleasing in travelling upon other legs than my own. I therefore quietly retained my seat; and though my companion halted the horse, for the purpose of my dismounting, I was so satisfied with my situation, that I pretended not to understand his meaning, and listened to his words, and viewed his gestures with an appearance of the greatest stolidity. At length, he determined to endeavour to shake me off. For this purpose he wriggled and twisted in his seat. I, however, clung still more closely to him; and the only one that appeared annoyed by the action, was the horse, who expressed his displeasure by kicking up.

The Indian finding this unsuccessful, increased the speed of his nag to a gallop—but in vain; I was as securely fixed behind, as the Old Man of the Sea, to the shoulders of Sinbad. At length he gave up, and checking his horse sprang off,

As he did this I slid forward into his seat. I felt some twinges respecting my ungrateful conduct, but my weariness overcame them.

My next object was to gain something to eat; for notwithstanding the squirrel, I felt a vacuum within, that required filling. I observed that my fellow traveller carried a bundle of dried venison, slung from his shoulder. I accordingly signified to him that I had eaten nothing for two days—at the same time pointing to the venison: but the fellow was obstinate; he shook his head, and afterwards whenever I started the subject, he looked in a different direction. Finding that fair means were of no avail, I determined to try what foul could do. As I was mounted, I resolved that he should think I intended to scamper off with his horse: so I thumped my rifle against his ribs, and scoured along the trail at full gallop.

The moment I started, the Indian followed, with a speed that almost equalled

that of the pony; but unfortunately for himself, his wind was soon exhausted. He then began to think of a compromise, and at last with much reluctance, loosed a piece of the deer's flesh, and held it up towards me, at the same time signifying by his gestures, that if I would stop, he would give me a portion. This was all that I desired; and pulling in the horse, I received the venison, and dismounted—relinquishing the nag to his owner. He, however, thinking the treaty between us, not yet sufficiently ratified, immediately lit his pipe, and passed it to me for a second smoke. We then set out, and at dusk reached a small wood: here the Indian hobbled his horse, and throwing a few sticks together, he kindled a fire. He then offered me a small piece of venison, which he had broiled upon the coals; after which he drew his blanket round him, and stretched himself at full length on one side of the fire, while I threw myself across

my rifle, on the other. I must have slept for an hour. When I awoke it was intensely cold, the fire having burnt very low. My companion lay exactly as I left him when going to sleep; he did not seem to notice that the fire was expiring, nor did the cold seem to affect him.

I rose up and stood over him; but he did not move. I then stirred him with my foot, and shouted to him—at the same time motioning to him, to assist in collecting wood to keep alive the fire. He apparently was aware of my object, for all I could elicit, was a grunt; nor would he even open his eyes to look at me. So in no very pleasant humour, I went in search of fuel, taking my rifle with me.

I had not gone far, before I came upon his little devil of a horse. I was so much vexed with the master, that I could not help bestowing a thwack upon the animal, who came smelling up to me, with the air of an old acquaintance. With a loud snort,

and a half attempt at a kick, he hobbled off, as well as the confined state of his legs would let him.

Hard of hearing, and difficult to rouse, as the Indian had been, when I attempted it, no sooner was the tramping sound of the horse's hoofs heard, as he crashed over the dead brushwood, than he sprang to his feet and came flying towards me with the swiftness of a deer.

I have but little doubt, that he thought I had served him an Indian trick, and was scouring off through the bushes with his nag. As it was, when he found him safe, he was for returning to stretch himself before the fire. I however arrested him, and motioned to him to assist in carrying a large limb to our sleeping place; which he did with evident reluctance; for he seemed to possess in a high degree the Indian aversion to labour.

About midnight he awakened me, and signified that it was time to be on the

move. He first unhobbled his horse, and led him to the bank of the river, which was clayey and very steep, for the purpose of watering him. Here a violent contest took place between the nag and the Indian: the first being afraid to venture down the slippery descent, and the master endeavouring by coaxing and kicking to induce him to advance. He had planted his feet in the very edge of the bank, and although his nose and head were pulled out to a horizontal line, by the efforts of the Indian, the rest of his body was as immoveable, as one of the trees around. The Indian then made signs to me to assist him, for he seemed determined that the horse should drink, whether thirsty or not. I did not feel in a very good humour with him, but as he seemed to wish it, I bestowed a few hearty thwacks upon the hinder parts of the animal, which seemed only to increase his desire to retrograde, instead of advancing. Finding

this of no avail, I seized a small sapling, and placing it under his belly, made use of it as a lever, to press him sidewise over the bank. The pressure against his ribs, drove him within a foot of the edge. I placed the pole beyond the verge of the bank, and again made use of it as a lever; it pushed him still nearer. He made a violent effort to resist; but just then the Indian jerked his little halter violently, and over the horse went, treading upon the toes of his master, and sousing heels over head in the river, where he swam up and down, puffing and snorting. Several times he attempted to climb the bank; but rolled back, and floundered in the water. The Indian was now alarmed lest he should be drowned. But he at last succeeded in helping him up the steep, and being satisfied that his thirst was completely quenched, he once more hobbled him, and then signified that we should move forward. Before starting, however, he took from

his shoulders his load of venison, and hung it upon a tree. I then followed him silently, though I could not imagine why he had left his venison, or why he travelled on foot, when he had a horse to carry him. We soon came to a river, across which, though full of ice, we waded, and then started forward on a trail which led through a wood. Occasionally I took the lead; but the trail grew so indistinct, that I was obliged to give place to my companion, who always kept on without hesitation.

We had travelled about twelve miles, making many circuits and windings, and striking from one trail to another, until we emerged from the wood, and I found myself again near the bank of the Konzas river. Before me was a large house, with a court-yard in front. I sprang with joy through the unhung gate, and ran to the door. It was open; I shouted; my voice echoed through the rooms: but there was

no answer. I walked in. The doors of the inner chambers were swinging from their hinges, and long grass was growing through the crevices of the floor. While I stood gazing around, an owl flitted by, and dashed out of an unglazed window. Again I shouted; but there was no answer: the place was desolate and deserted. I afterwards learned that this house had been built for the residence of the chief of the Konza tribe, but that the ground upon which it was situated, having been discovered to be within a tract, granted to some other tribe, the chief had deserted it, and it had been allowed to fall to ruin.

My guide waited patiently until I finished my examination, and then again we pressed forward. Several times I was deceived by the howling of wolves, which I mistook for the baying of house-dogs; and when I was passing through some dark skirt of timber, and expected to come upon a human habitation, I would be dis-

appointed, by seeing my guide once more launch out into the open prairie. Several times too, my hopes were excited by a light, glimmering in the darkness, which upon coming up, I would discover to proceed from the trunk of a tree, which had caught fire from the burning of the prairies.

Thus we kept on until near daylight, when we emerged from a thick forest, and came suddenly upon a small hamlet. The barking of several dogs, who came flying out to meet us, convinced me that this time I was not mistaken. A light was shining through the crevices of a log cabin; I knocked at the door with a violence, that might have awakened one of the seven sleepers.

“Who dere—and vot de devil you vant?” screamed a little cracked voice from within.

It sounded like music to me. I stated my troubles. The door was opened; a head, garnished with a red night-cap, was

thrust out, and after a little parley, I was admitted into the bed-room of the man, his Indian squaw, and a host of children. As, however, it was the only room in the house, it was also the kitchen. I had gone so long without food, that notwithstanding what I had eaten, the gnawings of hunger were excessive, and I had no sooner mentioned my wants, than a fire was kindled, and in ten minutes a meal (I don't exactly know whether to call it breakfast, dinner, or supper) of hot cakes, venison, honey, and coffee, was placed before me, and disappeared with the rapidity of lightning. The squaw having seen me fairly started, returned to her couch. From the owner of the cabin, I learned that I was now at the Konza Agency, and that he was the blacksmith of the place.

About sunrise I was awakened from a sound sleep, upon a bear-skin, by a violent knocking at the door. It was my Indian guide. He threw out broad hints

respecting the service he had rendered me, and the presents he deserved. This I could not deny ; but I had nothing to give. I soon found out, however, that his wants were moderate, and that a small present of powder would satisfy him ; so I filled his horn, and he left the cabin apparently well pleased.

In a short time I left the house, and met the Konza Agent, General Clark, a tall, thin, soldier-like man, arrayed in an Indian hunting shirt, and an old fox-skin cap.

He received me cordially, and I remained with him all day, during which time he talked upon metaphysics ; discussed politics, and fed me upon sweet potatoes. In speaking of my guide, I found that he had departed after receiving a large present from the Agent, to whom he stated that he had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours. I spoke of the deer's-flesh he had left behind.

“The lying rascal !” said the General, “he said he was starving.”

I spoke of the Indian pony.

“What colour was he?” asked the General.

“Black; with short mane, and crop ears.”

“My God! that’s my horse,” exclaimed he, “stolen four days ago. What a d——d villain that Konza is!”

At night the General furnished me with a mule, and kindly accompanied me to the garrison, which was forty miles distant, and which we reached on the following morning a little before daylight.

As I passed one of the out-houses in riding up to the cantonment, I perceived an Indian leaning against one of the door-posts. “Ugh!” exclaimed he, starting forward; and the next moment my hand was grasped in the cordial, but iron gripe of the Iotan chief.

The party had reached the garrison on the evening previous; and the whole wild band, both Pawnees and Otoes, were now under the protection of the whites.

CHAPTER XXII.

Assembling of Council.—Council.

MESSENGERS had been sent in every direction, to summon the neighbouring tribes, to meet their ancient enemy, the Pawnees, in council; and the day arrived upon which these rival nations, who had never before met except in deadly hostility, were to mingle in peaceful ceremonial.

The different tribes had been for several days collecting round the garrison, and had pitched their wild camps in the adjacent groves. There had always existed a bitter hostility, between many of the civilized and savage tribes. For this reason, especial care had been taken, to keep them separate, until by the influence of the council, this cessation of hostilities, should be converted into a permanent peace.

Early in the morning, the loud report of a piece of artillery bellowed through the woods, echoing in the deep forest upon the opposite side of the Missouri. This was the signal for the assembling of the council. In a few moments the warriors of the different tribes, were seen leaving their camps, and moving for the place appointed, beneath several of the large trees, in front of the quarters of the officers.

First came the Delawares, dressed for the occasion, glittering with trinkets; their silver ornaments glistening in the sunshine, and their gay ribands fluttering in the wind. They were a gaudy, effeminate-looking race. Yet beneath all their frippery of dress, lurked that indomitable courage, and that thirst for glory, which not even intemperance, and their intercourse with the whites could destroy. Behind the band, followed the proud Delaware warrior Sou-wah-nock. It was he that first kindled the torch of war, between

his own tribe and the Pawnees, and led the expedition that sacked the Pawnee village. He was without ornament, except a heavy silver plate, resting upon his calico hunting-shirt. He was not tall, but muscular, and his eye was as searching as an eagle's. There was a proud curl upon his lip; and withal, an iron firmness marked his whole deportment. He seemed to think that the whole weight of anger of the Pawnee nation, was about to descend upon himself, but was ready to meet it. He did not deny that he had incited his nation to the outrage, upon the Pawnee town. Nay, he gloried in it; and was now ready to meet them in friendship, or as enemies. He knew that his nation looked up to him, and determined that no act of his should ever sink him in their opinion.

After the Delawares, followed the Shawanese, headed by the same portly personage who had greeted us when we en-

tered as strangers, into the Indian country. The same enormous pair of black spectacles were seated astride of his nose, and from his whole appearance, it is probable that he had not undressed from the time that we had last saw him, some four months previous. At his heels followed the same little potatoe-headed Indian, who had also met us on the same occasion. Behind them, came the gaudy warriors of the tribe, reeking with paint, shining with tin ornaments, and flaunting with ribands. These seated themselves beside the Delawares.

Then followed the rest of the migrating tribes; the Peorias, the Piankashaws, the ragged Pottawattomies, and the lazy Kickapoos, who all in turn seated themselves, among their civilized brethren.

They had scarcely become stationary, when the Otoes made their appearance. They moved in Indian-file over the green, headed by their sagacious old chief the Iotan. They walked swiftly and silently,

and ranged themselves at a little distance from the more civilized, though less noble band, which had already collected. A few moments more, and the wild troop of Pawnees were seen approaching. They were muffled in their shaggy robes, and marched forward with a heavy though smothered tread. In front of them strode the giant form of the Wild Horse; his savage features not rendered any the less hideous by a drunken frolic, in which he had been engaged on the day previous. His long hair hung tangled round his head and shoulders. He wore no ornaments, and his body as usual was smeared with red ochre. The whole of his enormous chest was bared, and exposed to the cold chilling air of a frosty November morning. Behind him followed the graceful, though stern form of the Long Hair. He walked to his allotted place, without appearing to notice the congregated band of civilized Indians. There were several

other chiefs in the train, and after them followed the whole savage herd, from the four Pawnee villages.

These stationed themselves directly opposite the Delawares. Stern looks passed between them, and burning feelings were at work in their hearts. There they sat brooding over past wrongs. Enemies from the time that the Delawares had left the eastern states, they were now assembled to crush their bitter feelings, to put an end to that dark hatred which had hitherto existed between them, and to view each other, in a strange and novel light—that of friends. A total revulsion was to take place in their feelings. Old habits, old associations, were to be blotted out; deep-rooted prejudices were to be removed, and hands which before had clenched each other, only in the death-grapple, were now to be clasped in the warm pressure of friendship.

Several days before the commencement

of the meeting, a trifling incident was near putting an end to the incipient peace.

The little tribe of Delawares, who muster but a hundred and fifty warriors at most, had always considered themselves the source from whence sprang the numerous and powerful tribes scattered throughout the whole of North America. It is probable that this opinion is founded upon some tradition still current among them, respecting the power and antiquity of their forefathers. These, were the Lenni Lenape, who, coming up from the south, seated themselves upon the eastern shores, and were afterwards known to the whites by the name of Delawares. They are among the oldest of the tribes of which tradition speaks. The remnant of this race, in pursuance of their fatherly dogma, had now appropriated to themselves the title of great grandfathers to the whole Indian race. Among the host of their descendants were numbered those most

unfilial of all great grandchildren, the rebellious Pawnees. Notwithstanding the injunctions of obedience to parents, which have been laid down in all quarters of the globe, this nation had been unwilling to submit to the fatherly corrections, bestowed upon their tribe by their great ancestors. Nor is it to be wondered at; for they consisted, in quietly killing and scalping, all who fell in their way, and helping them forward in their journey towards the bright hunting grounds—a theme upon which an Indian is for ever harping, during the whole period of his probation here. In addition to the bitter feelings created by these hostilities, the Pawnees looked upon this little handful of warriors with the most sovereign contempt. Like many other undutiful children, they were ashamed of their great grandparents, and denied that they had ever sprung from the “Delaware dogs,” or that a drop of Delaware blood was mingled with that

which coursed through their veins. They concluded their expression of ill will, by refusing to commence the council, if they were to be looked upon as the descendants of that race. The Delawares, on the other hand, were equally obstinate. They insisted on adopting the refractory Pawnees as their great grandchildren, and that the latter should acknowledge them as their great grandparents.

For a short time the commissioner was perplexed. But at length, privately assembling the chiefs of the Pawnees, he endeavoured to overcome their prejudices by means of fair words, and finally succeeded in satisfying their scrupulous pride. He begged that for the sake of peace, the Delawares should be humoured, although he acknowledged to the Pawnees, that he knew there was no ground for their claim of relationship. At the same time, he added, it was so absurd in itself that no person would for a moment credit, that so

brave and powerful a people as the Pawnees, should have sprung from so paltry a stock as the Delawares. The chiefs smiled grimly as they received the pleasing unction of flattery, and at length consented, though with wry faces, to submit to the degrading appellation until the council should be ended, and the treaty ratified. They then threw out sage hints, which if translated literally, would amount nearly to the same thing, as sending the Delawares to the devil.

These preliminaries had been settled before the day of council. The great grandchildren, reversing the usual order of things, no longer disowned their great grandfathers; though farther than the mere title, there was no display of kindly feeling. The two bands sat opposite each other, with the same grim expression of countenances, that might have been expected from so many wild cats. Each seemed fearful to make a single friendly step in advance, lest he should compro-

mise the dignity of his tribe. After a short time the commissioner rose up, and stated the object of the meeting:—that war had long enough, been raging among them; and that the different tribes had now assembled for the purpose of uniting themselves in the bonds of friendship. He then entered explicitly, into the conditions of the intended peace.

When he had ended, different warriors of each tribe addressed the council. They all professed the greatest friendship for their enemies, and poured out very penitential speeches, bewailing their past transgressions, and winding up, by throwing the whole blame, upon the shoulders of some neighbouring tribe.

For a short time the potentates of several little nations, which had barely inhabitants enough to hang a name upon, eased their own importance by speaking. The Delaware warrior Sou-wah-nock then rose. He spoke of the destruction of the Grand

Pawnee village. He did not deny his agency in the deed. "The Pawnees," said he, "met my young men upon the hunt, and slew them. I have had my revenge. Let them look at their town. I found it filled with lodges: I left it a heap of ashes." The whole of his speech was of the same bold, unflinching character, and was closed in true Indian style. "I am satisfied," said he, "I am not afraid to avow the deeds that I have done, for I am Sou-wah-nock, a Delaware warrior." When he had finished, he presented a string of wampum to the Wild Horse, as being the most distinguished warrior of the Pawnee nation. When the slight bustle of giving, and receiving the present, had been finished, the chief of the Republican village rose to answer his warrior enemy.

His speech abounded with those wild bursts of eloquence, which peculiarly mark the savages of North America, and con-

cluded in a manner, which spoke highly of his opinion of what a warrior should be. "I have promised to the Delawares," said he, "the friendship of my tribe. I respect my promise, and I cannot lie, for I am a Pawnee chief."

When the Delawares had spoken, our little fat friend from the Shawnee village rose. After frequent expectorations, he at length succeeded in clearing a passage for the escape of his voice. He contrived with great difficulty to wheeze through a speech of about ten minutes in length. There appeared to be but two ideas in the whole of the address; and when he had thoroughly belaboured one, he most assiduously returned to the other. After repeating them again and again, with the addition of a new dress for each time, he seated himself, perfectly convinced that he had thrown a great deal of light upon the subject.

There was a strange contrast between

the deportment of the civilized, and savage Indians. The first, from long intercourse with the whites, had acquired many of their habits. Their iron gravity had yielded to a more mercurial temperament. Even in the midst of the council they gave free vent to their merriment, and uttered their gibes and jests. They were constantly on the move, coming and going to and from the place of assembly, and paying but little heed to the deliberations.

The Pawnees sat unmoved, listening in silence and with profound attention, to the addresses of those who spoke. They rarely uttered a word, and the only smile which curled their lips, was one of scorn at the frivolous deportment of their enemies.

From early in the morning, till near sunset, the council continued. They then adjourned until the following day; in order that a few little potentates, who considered themselves the luminaries of their respective villages, might receive an opportunity to display their eloquence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Pawnee Dance.—Delaware Visitors.

IN the evening it was determined, to bring the Delawares and the Pawnees together as friends, for as yet they had held no intercourse. A large fire was accordingly built before the out-houses in which the Pawnees had taken up their quarters, and the wild troop sallied forth, prepared to commence one of their national dances, round the flame. A group of eight or ten savage looking fellows, seated themselves a little distance off, furnished with a drum and rattle. They commenced a song, accompanied by their rude instruments. For a time there was no movement among the Pawnees, who stood huddled in a large, condensed crowd. Suddenly one of them, a tall muscular savage, sprang into the middle of the circle, and gazed around

with a hurried air, then with a loud yell he commenced his dance. He jumped slowly round the fire, with a kind of zigzag step: at every leap uttering a deep guttural "Ugh!" occasionally accompanied with a rattling sound, from the very bottom of his lungs. His comrades looked on silently, but with intense interest. They were a savage group; face and body begrimed with paint; their fierce features reflecting the flame, their teeth bared, and every brow knotted into a frown. Head rose behind head, and gleaming eyes were seen peering through the living mass, until those farthest off were hid by the darkness.

When the first warrior had made two or three circles about the fire, a second left the crowd and sprang forward in the dance; a third followed, and a fourth, until about twenty were flitting swiftly round, and joining in the song. Occasionally they stopped short in their course,

and uttered a loud shrill yell, which was taken up by the whole surrounding horde, until the very trees echoed to the sound. At one moment they moved swiftly forward, and at another their steps were slow and wearied. As we watched their fierce, earnest faces, the forms of some wrapped in shaggy robes, the painted bodies of others, writhing in the dance, and then turned to the silent, and equally savage group of lookers on, it required no great stretch of the imagination, to fancy them a host of evil spirits, busied in fiendish revel.

While they were thus engaged, the crowd separated and revealed a Delaware watching their movements. Behind him were about twenty more of the same tribe. No sooner had the Pawnees caught sight of them, than they retired. Old prejudices could not be rooted out at once, and though the dancers remained at their employment, the rest of the tribe drew off

in a sullen and haughty group, and stood watching the countenances of their *quon-dam* enemies.

This continued during the whole evening. As it grew late, group after group of the Pawnees left the fire, and retired into their dwelling. The Delawares soon followed their example, and although their visit had continued for several hours, I fear it did but little towards removing that ancient venom, which, in spite of their apparent friendship, was rankling in their hearts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Konza Council.—White Plume.—Tappage Chief.—Treaty.—Interpreter.—Departure.

ON the following morning, the loud report of a piece of artillery announced the hour of council. Once more the different tribes left their respective encampments, and assembled at the place of meeting. Scarcely, however, had they collected, before a long train of warriors were seen stringing over the distant prairie—making for the cantonment. They approached swiftly until they reached the quarters of the officers. They were clothed in white blankets; each man carried a rifle. They were a band from the Konza nation, come to attend the council, and settle the terms of peace. In front of the troop was the White Plume, enveloped in a large drab-coloured over coat.

This piece of dress deprived him altogether of that dignity of appearance which had marked him upon our first meeting. He now bore a strong resemblance in form and gracefulness, to a walking hogs-head. However, he seemed perfectly satisfied with his attire: and in truth, I believe there was scarcely a Pawnee who did not envy him the possession of this cumbersome article of apparel.

The appearance of this chief, and of a delegation from his tribe, had been anxiously expected. They were more venomous in their hate against the Pawnees, than any other of the neighbouring Indians, and their hostility had been marked by deeds of a more bloody character. The Pawnees sat in silence, but with looks of smothered ferocity, as they saw them approach. However, they evinced no hostile feelings, other than those conveyed by their glances.

After a short conference with their

agent, the Konzas withdrew from the green, and encamped in the prairie, at a few hundred yards' distance. The council then proceeded. The different chiefs and warriors of the small tribes of the vicinity, addressed the Pawnees—all agreeing to bury their hostility, and regard them as friends. These offers were most thankfully received by the Pawnees, though one of them afterwards remarked to the interpreter, “that they had now made peace with several nations with whom they had never been at war, and of whom they had never heard, until they rose to address them in council.” This was little to be wondered at; as many of them were most pitifully represented; and two or three little, pursy, short-winded fellows, dressed in dirty calico, and bedraggled ribands, composed the whole of their delegation, and probably the whole of their tribe.

The deliberations lasted during the

whole day: for as these Indians had no particular injuries to dwell upon, they confined themselves to things in general; and as this was a subject that would bear to be expatiated upon, every man continued his address until he had exhausted his wind. The Pawnees listened with exemplary patience; though I doubt if there was one who regretted when the last speaker had finished.

The morning following, the Pawnees and Konzas had a meeting to settle their difficulties. A large chamber in the garrison had been selected for the purpose. About ten o'clock in the forenoon they assembled. The two bands seated themselves upon long wooden benches, on opposite sides of the room. There was a strong contrast between them. The Konzas had a proud, noble air, and their white blankets as they hung in loose and graceful folds around them, had the effect of classic drapery.

The Pawnees had no pride of dress. They were wrapped in shaggy robes, and sat in silence—wild and uncouth in their appearance, with scowling brows, and close pressed mouths.

At length the speaking commenced. First rose the White Plume. He had boasted to his tribe, that he would relate such things, in his speech, as should cause the Pawnees to wince. With true Indian cunning, at first, in order that he might conciliate the favourable opinion of those present, he spoke in praise of the whites—expressing his high opinion of them. After this, he gradually edged off, into a philippic against the Pawnee nation, representing them as a mean and miserly race—perfidious, and revengeful. There was a hushed silence among his own people as he spoke, and every eye was fastened upon the grim group opposite. The White Plume went on; and still the deepest silence reigned through the room: that

of the Konzas arose from apprehension: the silence of the Pawnees was the hushed brooding of fury.

The chief of the Tappage village was sitting directly opposite the speaker; his eye was dark as midnight: his teeth were bared, and both hands were tightly grasped round his own throat; but he remained silent until the speech had finished. When the White Plume had taken his seat, half a dozen Pawnees sprang to their feet; but the Tappage chief waved them down: three times did he essay to speak, and as often, did he fail. He rubbed his hand across his throat, to keep down his anger; then stepping out, and fixing his eye on that of the Konza chief—in the calm, quiet voice of smothered rage, he commenced his answer: he proceeded; he grew more and more excited—indulging a vein of biting irony. The White Plume quailed, and his eye drooped, beneath the searching, scornful glance of his

wild enemy. Still the Pawnee went on: he represented the injury which first kindled the war between the two nations. "My young men," said he, "visited the Konzas as friends: the Konzas treated them as enemies. They were strangers in the Konza tribe, and the Konzas fell upon them, and slew them—and concealed their death." He then entered into the particulars of the quarrel, which unfortunately for the Konzas, were strongly against them. The chief of the latter tribe, received the answer with great philosophy; nor did he attempt to utter any thing in reply. Perhaps, too, he did not wish to invite a second attack, from so rough a quarter. When the Pawnee had finished, the commissioner interposed, and after a short time, harmony was restored, and several of the inferior chiefs made their harangues. They were of a more calm and conciliating nature, and gradually tended to soothe the inflamed feelings of

their foes. The council lasted until sunset, when the terms of the treaty were finally adjusted.

On this occasion I was made sensible of the justice of the complaint generally made, by those who have had public negotiations with the savage tribes, of the insufficiency of the interpreters through whom they are obliged to receive the sentiments and language of the Indians. They are with few exceptions, ignorant and illiterate. Those we employed, spoke a wretched French patois, and a still more wretched English. On such, even the high imaginative vein, the poetical thought, which run through Indian eloquence, is entirely lost. There was not a savage who addressed us, who did not at times, clothe his ideas in beautiful attire, and make use of wild and striking similes, drawn from the stores of his only instructress, nature. This we ascertained from some persons present of cultivated minds, and who were well versed

in the Indian tongues. As to the interpreters, they reduced every thing to a bald, disjointed jargon.

On the day following the council, the articles of peace were signed, and most of the tribes departed for their respective homes. A few of the Pawnees and Otoes remained to accompany the Commissioner to the village of the Osages, for the purpose of negotiating a peace with that tribe; with whom they had long been at deadly enmity.

Here then I will conclude this series of Indian Sketches; for the council being ended and my curiosity satisfied, I determined to return homeward on the following day. A feeling of sadness came over me as I prepared to leave those, with whom I had for months associated. However different in dispositions and feelings, we had until then, been united by a link of sympathy. We had led the same life; viewed the same scenes, and undergone

the same privations. For months together one tent had sheltered us, and we had eaten from the same board. A rough, untrammelled friendship had sprung up between us, increasing with the distance between ourselves and our homes, and strengthening as we retired farther from the abode of civilized man.

But now we had returned from our wanderings, and were once more in the circle of our fellows. Still old recollections bound us together by a golden tie, that was painful to sever; and although my home with all its attractions rose in my fancy, yet I felt sad, when one of the orderlies informed me that all was ready.

I shook hands with my friends and comrades of the wilderness, and mounting my mule, with a heavy heart, turned my back upon Leavenworth.

THE END.



IRVING'S
INDIAN
SKETCHES

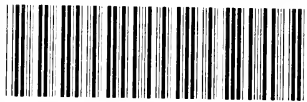
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